

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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Miners Strike

The noose is lowered over Willis – the allies of the striking miners are not the betraying trade union and labour leaders

GO OUT TO THE PEOPLE

Every stage of the miners' strike has exposed not only the 'false friends' of the striking miners and their communities but also their true allies. If the temporary stalemate, which now exists between the opposing forces, is to be decisively broken in favour of the striking miners, those real allies must now take their place alongside the mining communities as part of a fighting force to defeat the NCB, the Thatcher government and those 'false friends' of the miners who lead the Labour and trade union movement.

The real allies are to be found amongst those who are already facing the Thatcher government's attacks on jobs, living standards, hospitals and basic democratic rights. They are the most oppressed sections of the working class – the unemployed, black people, Irish people, low paid workers, working class women and also those who have, in the course of defending their democratic rights, faced state repression – the Greenham women, students like those fighting fascism at North London Poly,

and the many people collecting on the streets for the miners. In other words the support of hundreds of thousands of ordinary people already sympathetic to the striking miners must now be organised into a political force that can decisively break the impasse and take forward not only the miners' strike but the entire working class. The striking miners must go out to the people!

During November the initiative had temporarily passed to the government as the NCB/media sponsored 'back-to-

work' movement became a challenge to the unbroken solidarity of the vast majority of the mining communities. By the beginning of December the 'back-to-work' movement had been successfully halted by a combination of militant picketing and determined resistance to Thatcher's national riot police.

The NCB and the government were forced to turn once again to their corrupt courts and ruling class judges in an attempt to destroy the ability of the NUM and its leaders to run the strike.

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Centre pages

Ian MacGregor and the
Merchant Banks
'a little local difficulty'
+ The Media and the
Miners' Strike



South Africa

Eight face treason trial

Death sentences hang over eight leaders of the United Democratic Front charged with treason. The British and US imperialists have played a perfidious role in apartheid's latest and most vicious attack on the UDF. In the words of Zac Yacoob, legal representative for the Durban 6, 'Thatcher is now the policewoman for Botha'.

On 10 December Mewa Ramgobin, George Sewpersadh and M J Naidoo, three out of the original Durban 6 who left the British consulate on 6 October and who were immediately detained, together with Dr Essop Jassat, Aubrey Mokoena and Curtis Nkondo, were charged with treason, subversion and furthering the aims of the outlawed ANC. Thatcher's government knew that the remaining three fugitives were liable to arrest the moment they stepped outside the consulate. It still refused to aid them. The 3 issued a statement through Dr Farouk Meer, the only man allowed to visit them by the British who have since 7 October denied access to families and lawyers, condemned the 'ignomini-

ous role of the British government' during the three month sit-in. On 12 December massed crowds welcomed the heroes as they left the consulate. The British consulate staff and Barclays Bank which owns the consulate building even refused them a room for a press conference. Security police arrested Archie Gumede, a President of the UDF and Paul David of the Release Nelson Mandela Committee on the charge of high treason. Malcolm Rifkind, British Minister of State at the Foreign Office welcomed the move,

'We are always delighted when detention without trial is lifted. They will at least be able to answer these charges in court – and the South African courts do have a healthy reputation for independence'.

The Durban 6 have succeeded in their aim to focus international attention on the plight of South Africa's detainees. In 1984, up to November, 1,064 are known to have been detained without trial under the Internal Security Act. Scores of UDF detainees have simply 'disappeared'. Detainees are held incommunicado. Popo Molofé, National Secretary of the UDF, was kept in leg

irons and handcuffed to his hospital bed. Primary school pupils held in Sebokeng police station were forced to swallow lighted cigarettes. The police have returned food parcels for the detainees and relatives suspect hunger strikes have started. One convicted prisoner, Thami Mkhwanazi serving 7 years for alleged involvement with the ANC, has been on hunger strike since 29 October. Thami Mali, Moses Mayekiso, Themba Montlamlane and Oupa Monareng, leaders of the 4 and 5 November Transvaal stay-at-home strike, and student leader Peter Makgoba have been charged with subversion and face a possible 25 year sentence.

A revolutionary situation is developing in South Africa, as unrest permeates all levels of society. The stayaway which mobilised up to 800,000 workers and 400,000 students was the biggest in 35 years, uniting students, community organisations and trade unions. The participation of the union federations Fosatu and Cusa which have hitherto concentrated on workplace demands emphasises the co-ordination of the struggle between all sections of the oppressed.

Botha's regime has declared war on the South African people. In the black townships 1,000 have died. Mass arrests include 598 people at a funeral in Sebokeng, 132 people in Bophelong for attending an illegal gathering, over 200 students from the University of Transkei, 354 people in Sebokeng during combined police and army house to house raids, 8,000 people from Sebokeng Hostel for not paying rents.

War conditions require war propaganda. The police arrest foreign television crews filming their attacks on peaceful demonstrations. Information on police and army operations in the black townships can no longer be made

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India

Merchants of Death

1984 ends with the death count continuing in Bhopal and Ethiopia: two glimpses into the horror of the oppressed nations. US celebrity lawyers have descended upon Bhopal offering their services for a fee, while establishment papers pour gallons of ink to blot out the trail of imperialism from the hunger camps of Ethiopia.

Union Carbide offered compensation for its crime: £1.5 million in aid, about £300 for each of the estimated 5,000 dead or £30 for each person left partially or totally blind. One lawyer is advertising \$15 billion as the sum he has filed in damages against Union Carbide: \$60 each for the ¼ million refugees terrified of the Union Carbide plant which dominates their shanty towns.

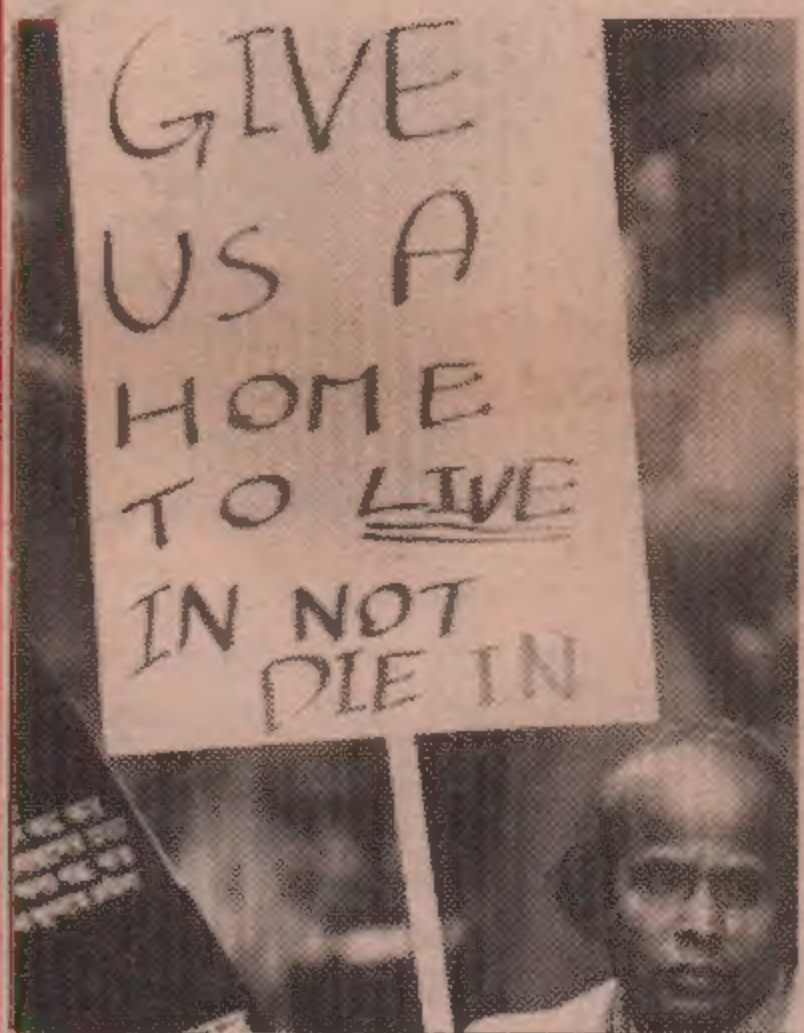
The Third World consumes only 15% of the type of pesticide whose ingredients killed in Bhopal. Yet half the world's pesticide casualties and ¾ of its annual toll of 40,000 lives, occur in the Third World. Britain is the 3rd largest manufacturer of these compounds. Many pesticides forbidden in the developed capitalist nations are sold to and produced in the oppressed nations. And the *Wall Street Journal*, house paper of the giant transnationals, rinses its hands and calls for business as usual: 'Of those people killed, half would not be alive today if it were not for that plant and the modern health standards made possible by the wide use of pesticides.'

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CAMDEN'S HOMELESS TAKE OVER

Homeless black families and their supporters have taken the initiative in organising against Labour controlled Camden Council's racist housing policies. On 20 November, Mrs Karim and her two children died in a fire in a 'guest house' they had been put in by the council. The fire-extinguishers in this death trap were empty, the alarm had been switched off and the hostel did not have a fire certificate. Two days after the tragedy 22 families living in similar property tried to meet the councillors. The councillors refused. The people occupied the council chamber while it was in session on 23 November.

They were stunned when councillors read out a prepared statement and declared there could be no further discussion. Bob Latham – Chair of Camden's Race and Community Relations Committee – arranged beforehand for the police to be called in the event of the councillors being held in the chamber. The homeless families soon found themselves 'negotiating' with the police. Twenty five police thugs forced their way into the council chamber and a homeless youth later went to hospital.



The racist response of the council to the legitimate demands of the homeless black families was not taken lying down. Since 23 November, the occupiers have remained in the town hall and received support from hundreds of organisations and individuals. Their demands are simple: a public inquiry into the death of Mrs Karim and her children, compensation for Mr Karim, disciplinary action against senior management, rehousing of all families in these death-trap hostels and the rehousing of all families living in bed and breakfast accommodation within six months. The council after having agreed to these demands made a sudden U-turn and has refused to implement them.

In response the occupation has stepped up its campaign. On 11 November it organised a demonstration through the streets of Camden with numerous banners from supporting organisations including FRFI, City AA, Federation of Bangladeshi Youth Organisations, National Union of Teachers and others. Support has poured in from over 240 local and national organisations. The occupation has been visited by individuals, political organisations and striking miners including a contingent of black striking miners from Nottinghamshire.

The occupation has become a centre and a focus for all those in struggle. A youth told FRFI: 'There is a fine spirit of revolution here.' And a black youth said to FRFI:

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FRFI – PRICE INCREASE

FRFI has after five years gone up in price to 30p. We recognise this is a steep rise in these times of growing unemployment and poverty. Unfortunately our bills have increased enormously in the last period and we have been left with little choice. The paper will however still be 20p for the unwaged and subscription rates will be held at the same price for at least three months. So take out a subscription now and save money!

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That the judges could blatantly rule in the government's favour and hand over the NUM's funds to government agents is wholly due to the treacherous character of the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade union movement. These opportunists and traitors are the immovable barrier to real solidarity action among those who support the miners within the official Labour and trade union movement. The 3 December NUM delegate conference decisively voted to defy the reactionary courts and called on the TUC for support and to organise industrial action. The TUC refused. It is now clear that if the impasse is to be broken the decisive push will have to come from outside this movement. This is why the miners should now turn to their supporters amongst the ordinary people and organise with them the only political force capable of combating the reactionary alliance of the NCB, the Thatcher government and its agents in the working class movement.

GOVERNMENT'S OFFENSIVE SET BACK

Back-to-work movement fails

The government put great store on the success of the back-to-work movement. They had hopes of the strike being broken by Christmas with half the workforce back at work. This hope did not materialise in spite of the riot police, the hourly media propaganda bulletins and the NCB bribes – the last being a £175 'bonus' – on account from last year's unsettled pay rise. To try and discourage strikers, the government added £1 to the imaginary £15 'strike pay' already deducted from DHSS benefits of strikers' families.

Even at its peak the NCB could only claim that 5,952 miners went back to work in one week – a thousand short of the 7,000 they had hoped for. The decline in the 'back-to-work' movement is shown even in the following NCB concocted figures:

week ending 10 November 1984	2,200
" " 17 November 1984	5,019
" " 24 November 1984	5,952
" " 1 December 1984	2,158
" " 8 December 1984	667
" " 15 December 1985	477

Needless to say, by 8 December the media propaganda on the 'back-to-work' movement abruptly ceased. Figures at the end of November from an NCB internal report even show that 100 new strikers were now joining the strike each week.

An article in *The Observer* (25 November) showed how NCB figures were deliberately fiddled. For example the NCB figure of 66,409 NUM working includes 9,100 who are not at work due to illness – that is not at work or on strike. Often NCB area figures include COSA (clerical), BACM (managers) and NACODs (pit deputies) members. On 8 December *The Guardian* now reported 'despite the fact that 16,383 miners have returned to work since the end of October there has been no big increase in the amount of deep mined coal being produced'. So much for the 'back-to-work' movement.

Scabs and Courts combine

The legal system has, with the aid of scab miners, been used as a blatant political weapon against the NUM. It is significant that it is not the Tories' employment legislation which has been used in

the attacks on the miners' union, but the 'normal' civil law of Britain, manipulated by a treacherously corrupt and vicious ruling class judiciary.

The NUM now faces 20 or more legal actions in the courts. Scab miners, funded from a whole number of right wing sources, including private businessmen, Aims of Industry, Moral Rearmament, are assisted by a range of similarly minded solicitors and journalists. Also deeply involved in advising the scab miners' committees are two of Thatcher's aides – Tim Bell of Saatchi, and Saatchi (who also advises MacGregor) and David Hart. Hart, whose merchant banker father worked at one time with MacGregor, was described by a miner who left a scab miners' committee in disgust:

'He was handing over sums of up to £300 in cash as floats. In my opinion, Hart was not acting as an adviser, he was running the show'.

The appointment of the accountants Price Waterhouse to sequester the NUM funds took place during October, due to so-called 'contempt of court' by NUM leaders after failure to pay the £200,000 fine imposed in October. The sequestrators reported to the High Court on 28 November that £2.78m of NUM funds had been located in Dublin, £4.63m in Luxembourg and £503,000 in Zurich. Three days later the High Court took the unprecedented step of declaring Arthur Scargill, Peter Heathfield and Mick McGahey 'unfit persons' to be trustees of NUM funds and removed

Saturday 19 January VICTORY TO THE MINERS! STOP THE POLICE STATE! DEMONSTRATION

Assemble 12.30pm Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, NI (nearest tube Angel or Highbury)

Speakers: South Wales NUM
Tony Benn MP
Jeremy Corbyn MP

Organised by Islington Miners' Support Committee

Sponsors: Finsbury Park NUR, George Orwell School NUT, Holloway SWP, Irish Solidarity Movement, RCG

them, appointing a receiver in their place. The receiver appointed was Herbert Brewer, a Derbyshire solicitor, chairman of a local Tory Party, a director of several companies and a freemason. The High Court refused the NUM's appeal against this gross anti-working class measure the following day. In response the NUM called an emergency delegate conference on 3 December where it was decided to continue to defy the courts and not to bring money back to Britain to pay the fines. This conference also called for TUC support against what Scargill called 'an attempt to hijack the union'. Following the ludicrous Brewer's failure to return any NUM funds to Britain, a new receiver has been appointed – Michael Arnold of Arthur Young McLelland Moores. The government itself has now decided to underwrite the expenses of the receiver to avoid any further embarrassment. Such open interference in

LEFT CALLS FOR GENERAL STRIKE

The repeated calls for a General Strike by Trotskyists and sections of the Labour Party left are not only unrealistic in the face of the TUC and Labour Party's cowardly refusal to break the law, they are dangerous, and could lead to demoralisation and inactivity. A failed General Strike in the unlikely event of one being called would bring certain victory for the government and the NCB as every major union would split. And this would be used as yet a further excuse for the Labour leaders to isolate Arthur Scargill and the striking miners.

The headlines in most of the Trotskyist papers are calls for the dead to breathe: 'TUC get off your knees' (*Socialist Worker* 7 December), 'TUC must back the miners - Call a 24 hour General Strike!' (*Socialist Action* 7 December), 'Organise a General Strike to Back the Miners' (*Newsline* every day), 'General Strike needed to defend union rights' (*Militant* 7 December).

legal matters reveals once again that the ruling class abandons any pretence of the 'neutrality of the law' when it ceases to be useful for its purposes.

An attempt being made in the High Court to appoint a receiver for the NUM Yorkshire funds – said to be even greater than the national fund – was adjourned on 13 December until March. The insidious action by two North Derbyshire scabs to seek a high court order to force 3 officials in their local area NUM to pay back £1.7 million used for the strike, failed on 14 December. Even here the judge accepted the scabs' arguments that the strike was unlawful and that the local officials were personally liable to repay £1.7m, but he would not grant such an order.

In addition, during November, as well as making illegal a 50p levy imposed by the National Union of Seamen on its members, the High Court stopped students from North London Poly Students Union making a donation to the miners. The High Court also turned down an appeal by 4 striking Yorkshire miners that police road blocks into Notts were illegal. One significant victory took place in a test case at a Magistrates court in London where Barrister James Wood, himself accused of making an illegal collection for the miners in Bloomsbury, London, was found not guilty of the charge.

State terror continues...

The government/NCB have continued, to use police terror to get scabs into work. It is remarkable that police, who say they do not have the forces to protect Asian families from racist attacks, can provide whole units to protect a single scab and his family. Renewed battles between riot police and pickets, begun at Cortonwood on 9 November, have continued almost daily in Yorkshire and South Wales on an unprecedented scale. Barricades have been lit, trenches dug, bricks and petrol bombs have been thrown – in order to prevent the 'back-to-work' movement from breaking the strike. This has to a great extent been successful. Police have launched vicious attacks on entire communities just as in the Six Counties of Ireland. In Rossington (12 November) and Thurscoe (20 November) in Yorkshire, police ran amok and forced their way into Miners Welfare Clubs, viciously beating miners to the ground

All these organisations of the left refuse to acknowledge the fundamental split in the working class movement. They sow illusions in the ability of the trade union leadership to deliver the goods amongst those who want the miners to win. When their wishful thinking fails to materialise no doubt we will be subjected to self-righteous sermons about the 'betrayers' of the strike. The high priests of Trotskyism – the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) – have already renounced any contact with material reality. Not only have they scabbed throughout the strike by calling for a national ballot, they now have a long list of betrayers of the 'miners' battle for jobs'. Chief among them is Arthur Scargill.

The call now for a general strike is in fact an evasion of the real responsibilities and tasks facing revolutionaries in relation to the strike. This demands facing up to reality and building support for the miners amongst sections of the working class which have everything to gain from the miners victory.

and, in the latter case, dragging out a 13 year old boy.

In contrast to the almost total silence in the media on the activities of the police occupation of the pit villages has been the hysteria over strikers' anger against scabs who have betrayed their communities and their class. Once again, on 26 November, Thatcher and Brittan took up the campaign to equate miners – their so-called 'enemy within' – with the IRA. This refrain, together with that equating Scargill with Oswald Moseley – 'left fascism' – are the government's crude attempts to isolate miners from their supporters among people in all areas of the country.

LABOUR LEADERS HOLD BACK STRIKE

TUC and Labour Party leaders have not only stood silent while mining communities – women, children and men – have been beaten up in their communities and on the picket lines – they have actively sought to bring about the defeat of the miners. Small wonder that it is reported that NUM branches and many individual miners are leaving the Labour Party in disgust. Kinnock, who referred with contempt to the strike as a 'potential Gallipoli', while doing his best to sabotage it, had the nerve while he was in Moscow, to tell Soviet miners that the reports of British miners' families starving were exaggerated. At a 6,000 strong rally in South Wales in November which Kinnock was 'too busy' to attend, a banner appeared asking 'Where's Ramsay MacKinnock?' At the same rally, a noose was lowered down in front of Norman Willis, TUC General Secretary, who had come to the rally to condemn 'the brick, the bolt and the petrol bomb'. Willis's speech was abruptly ended as the noose was lowered, drowned out by a united and continuous chanting of 'Here we go, here we go, here we go...'. The next day Kinnock, Hattersley and a battery of trade union leaders rushed to sympathise with Willis and to attack those men and women who dared to criticise such as they. The noose symbolised a rejection of all that these foul opportunists stand for – their refusal to fight, their subservience to the ruling class and its courts and police. The noose also signified that they cannot be reformed – they must and will be swept to one side.

After the NUM's decision to defy the courts at its special delegate conference on 3 December, the TUC met miners' leaders. The TUC announced it could give no help to the miners other than 'encouraging' members to take industrial action in support of the miners, and further they could not undertake any action which would bring them into contempt of the law, such as openly offering premises or wages to NUM workers. On the same day Kinnock too said that the Labour Party could not contemplate breaking the law.

Despite Arthur Scargill's appeals over the heads of union leaders to their members, the organised labour movement has not responded and remains deeply divided over support for the miners.

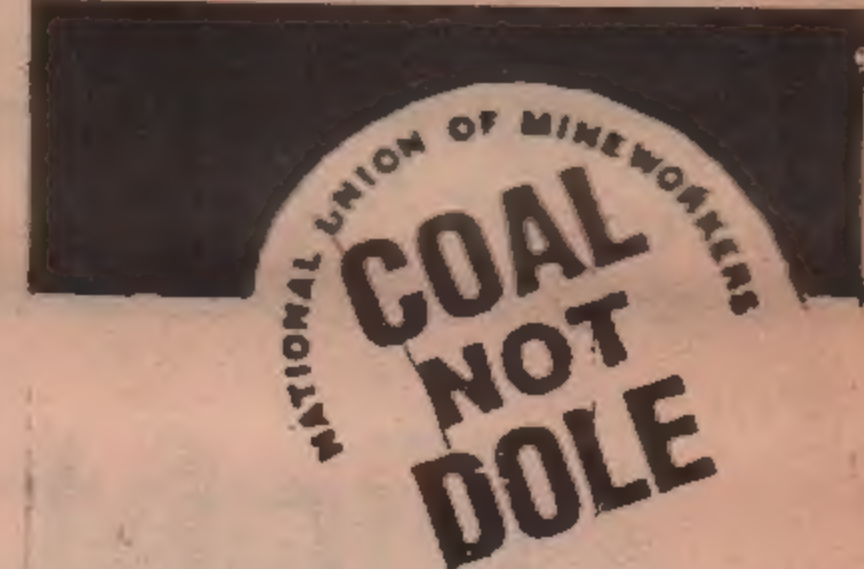
Some manual workers at power stations at Didcot, West Thurrock and in Yorkshire, are refusing to handle scab coal, and railway workers at one main

depot at Coalville in Leicestershire are refusing to move coal. Apart from this, solidarity actions still remain at an abysmally low level. In contrast, masked squads of French CGT miners overturned railway wagons carrying coal at Marseilles and Calais in an act of real solidarity with their British comrades.

CLASS WAR PRISONERS

'There are a lot of miners who have been picked up and locked up in prison today and if I have one criticism of the NUM... it's this: they have not yet thought out clearly their position in relation to their imprisoned comrades and that is a grave weakness... will they be forgotten about or is it just a memory, a demonstration outside the prisons now and again? How are their comrades to behave when they are locked in prison... If they are political prisoners obviously they must then fight for political status within the prison, that is something that the miners, as far as I know, haven't yet thought about...' (John McCluskey, Irish POW, at ISM Conference 14 October 1984).

By early December 8,731 miners had been arrested (this does not include sup-



ISLINGTON MINERS SUPPORT GROUP TAKES TO THE STREETS

Following two successful public meetings of the North London Irish Solidarity Committee (NLISC) where South Wales miners showed that in their struggle for jobs they have come up against the same enemy as the Irish people, NLISC and FRFI comrades joined in the work of the Islington Miners Support Committee. We wanted to link the struggle of the miners and the Irish people and take it to the people of Islington.

In Islington we also have our own Kinnocks and Willis doing their best to undermine the support for the miners. Local councillors from the so-called Socialist Republic of Islington refused to give striking miners a free room in the town hall. It was only the intervention of the local NALGO and NUPE branches who agreed to pay the council's extortionate charge of £50 a week – plus other expenses, that prevented the miners being left on the streets.

As part of the Islington Support Committee, NLISC and FRFI supporters are also having street meetings with miners and a mobile street collection/ meeting just before Christmas. Our major work for the rest of the month is to build for a demonstration on 19 January in support of the miners.

Victory to the miners!
Alan Jones

DAILY MIRROR SCABS

A conference representing 200,000 black South African mineworkers has appealed to British miners not to emigrate to South Africa. The Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union and the NUM (SA) said that recruited miners have 'sold out' the British NUM and should go back home to join the miners' just cause. *The Daily Mirror* adverts for miners and underground electricians to join the Rand Corporation on 'top salaries' brought a picket of 25 people organised by City AA outside their offices. The Bingo millionaire's press can expect much bigger protests if it continues its scabbing on South African and British miners alike.

South African and British miners – one struggle, one fight!



CHRIS DAVIES/NETWORK

porters), 120 miners had been gaoled and 17 sent to detention centres. In addition large numbers of miners are being held on remand – over 100 in Armley prison Leeds. The first woman, Brenda Greenwood, was gaoled for defying bail conditions. Hundreds more miners face certain prison sentences, some of them very lengthy ones. There include miners arrested for attacks on scabs and also the two miners charged with the murder of the scab taxi driver in South Wales. In the face of the wholesale 'criminalisation' of the mining communities in struggle, an urgent task confronts these communities and their supporters: the building of political and material support for the prisoners and their families.

The miners are the largest group of workers so far in Britain to go to gaol as class war prisoners. As the class struggle intensifies thousands more are bound to follow. The British prison system is barbaric and uncivilised and it refuses to acknowledge the existence of political and class war prisoners. 12 Irish political prisoners died on hunger strike in their rightful struggle for political status – 2 of them died in English gaols. Des Warren, the Shrewsbury building worker, gaoled in 1973 under the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875,

went on hunger strike in early 1974 for 22 days in his fight for political status. This was refused by a Labour government.

The miners in prison must organise to defend themselves and the rights of class war prisoners. They will find experienced allies in the Irish and black prisoners who have carried out a consistent struggle over many years in defence of their own interests and those of all prisoners. The miners will find many of the ordinary prisoners they meet sympathetic to their struggle. For these prisoners suffer equally under the yoke of the capitalist system, its laws, courts and barbaric prison regime.

The class struggle on the outside must not end at the prison gate. If it is not carried on inside the prison by those who have shown themselves to be the most resolute fighters for their class, then it can lead to demoralisation on the outside. For those facing the daily threat of imprisonment for fighting the class struggle must be confident in the knowledge that should they be sent to prison they will join their comrades and many others to continue the class struggle on the inside. As the experience of every revolutionary struggle has shown, the prisons will become training schools for the future revolutionary movement.

A political movement can be assessed by the way it looks after and organises support for its prisoners. Urgent work must be carried out in setting up prisoners support groups throughout the country. Every miner in prison must know that there are those on the outside who organise political and material support and who are ready to publicly respond to any attack or any denial of democratic rights the prison system may impose on miners. Miners' relatives and friends have to play a central role in building these support groups. Revolutionaries have a vitally important task in helping to bring this about. Imprisoned miners and these groups will have to conduct a political fight for the recognition of class war prisoners in the British

CLASS WAR PRISONERS

In the last fierce class struggle here – which was the period of strikes and working class militancy leading up to the 1926 General Strike – hundreds of workers were jailed for long periods of hard labour.

The setting up of the British section of the International Class War Prisoners Aid (ICWPA) in 1925 was a response to the clear need to defend and support the prisoners – in particular leading communists charged with sedition – for calling on the armed forces not to fire on workers in struggle. The ICWPA also took up the defence of South Wales anthracite miners who had had vicious sentences imposed in an attempt to crush their struggle.

The campaign of the British working class to defend its prisoners was made in common cause with the international struggle – particularly the anti-imperialist struggles of the Indian and Irish people against British rule. Rallies up and down the country in February 1925 were addressed by the black communist MP Satarji Sakatvala, and by Jim Larkin, leader of the Dublin workers during the 1913 Lock-Out.

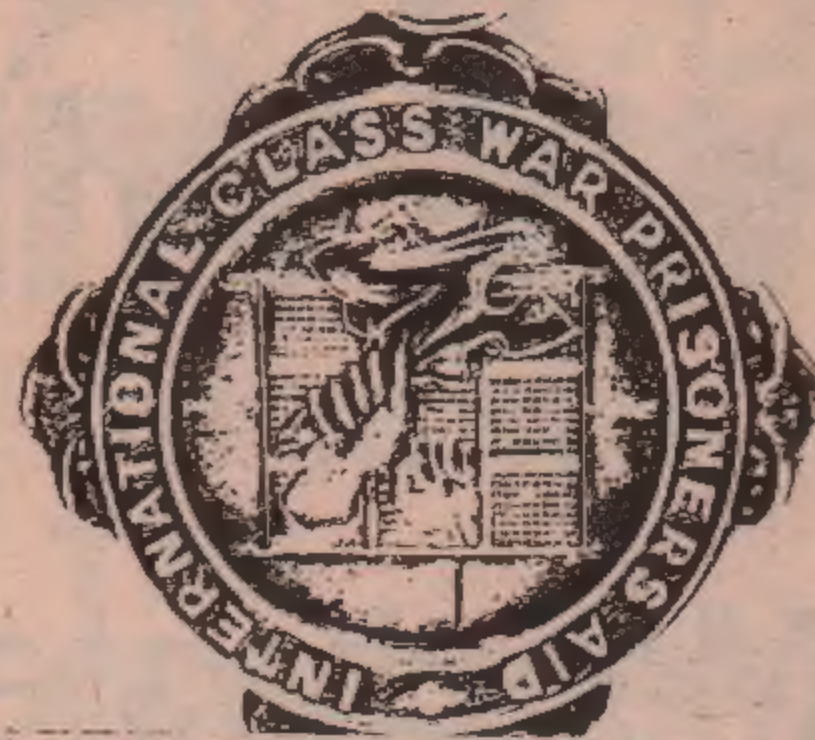
Sakatvala was able to present to Parliament a petition of 300,000 signatures,

gathered in just over one month, which demanded the instant release of all class-war prisoners.

On Release the Prisoners Day, 7 February, 1926, 15,000 marched from Clapham over the common to Wandsworth prison where the Communist leaders were held. On 7 March of the same year, a mass solidarity rally packed the Albert Hall.

As miners today go to prison they will find their allies amongst those who have been in the vanguard of the struggle for prisoners' rights – Irish political prisoners, black prisoners and others who have fought against solitary confinement, censorship, druggings and beatings.

The inevitable struggle against criminalisation inside the prisons can only be successful if a campaign in solidarity is built outside. In this, the women who have built the miners' wives support groups will undoubtedly play a major role – just as the women of the nation-



Class War Prisoners medal

alist working class in Ireland built the Relatives Action Committees to mobilise their people against the criminalisation of the H-Block prisoners.

FRFI has always committed itself to support the struggle for prisoners' rights and against the criminalisation of political prisoners. Our newspaper will be a friend and ally to any miner imprisoned for fighting for his class, and to their families on the outside.

Victory to the miners! Free all class war prisoners!

Pauline Sellars, Maggie Mellon

prison system and for freeing of all political prisoners. The lessons learned today will serve the working class movement well in the future.

GO OUT TO THE PEOPLE!

The organised working class movement has failed to give the kind of active solidarity that could have already led to a victory for the miners. The leaders of the Labour and trade union movement feel themselves under no significant pressure to organise any further support. On the contrary they are doing their utmost to force the miners to accept an unprincipled compromise with the NCB, hence the eagerness of the TUC, on Friday 14 December, to grovel before Peter Walker, the Energy Secretary, and plead with him to restart negotiations.

While revolutionaries must continue to fight for and build active solidarity with the miners within the organised trade union movement, a new emphasis must now be given to going out to build new fighting alliances outside that movement.

At the beginning of the strike on 28 March 1984 Arthur Scargill said of the Tory government:

'They know they are in largely uncharted land because this dispute is mainly about jobs, and waiting in the wings are four million unemployed whose numbers could swell the picket lines at any time.'

Unfortunately, the work necessary to bring this about has never been done. For the organised trade union movement has systematically violated and ignored the growing ranks of the unemployed. Likewise, miners have spoken of significant support amongst black people for the strike. Yet little has been done to draw on this powerful potential ally in their struggle. Besides this, thousands of low paid workers and women workers, ignored and appallingly treated by the organised labour movement over the years are willing to make their contribution to the fight.

Support groups throughout the country have played a central role in providing material assistance for the miners strike. While this is vital, the support groups must begin to play a more substantial political role in support of the strike and for the defeat of the Thatcher government. The miners and their supporters must build such groups with the aim of drawing in all these new forces into their struggle in every town, city and mining community in the country.

Revolutionaries have to help turn these support groups into fighting organisations that can begin to exert a new pressure on the labour movement to back the strike and to force the Thatcher government into a retreat. These support groups must organise more public meetings and local demonstrations to draw in new forces in support of the miners and counter with leaflets and

regular bulletins the vile propaganda put out by the government controlled media. In the major urban centres pickets could be organised on police stations – this could be particularly effective if coordinated with NUM mass pickets. This would stretch the resources of the police and take some of the pressure off the picket lines. Local demonstrations can have the same effect. This could be of real significance in London whose hated Metropolitan Police have played a savage role in brutalising miners and their supporters. Support groups should continue to visit mining communities and join the picket lines if requested. This has now to be done in a more systematic way.

These support groups could organise material support for and defence of prisoners and regular pickets of prisons where there are miners inside. They could put pressure on local Labour councils, Labour councillors and Labour MPs to be more active in support of the miners' strike – picketing Labour council meetings, MPs' and councillors' surgeries if necessary. Such developments would not only have a significant impact on the strike but would play a constructive role in starting the process of rebuilding the working class movement in Britain.

Victory to the miners
Release all class war prisoners

Olivia Adamson
David Reed

Out picketing

Pit Lane already had two trenches which the police had filled in the previous night. But this night the trench could not be filled in a hurry – it was about 2 foot deep and about 3 foot wide. A group of youths began to gather together at the far pit gate. They donned balaclavas and masks as they warned themselves around the picket fire. The work began after all the hellos has been said and stories told about the previous night's incidents with the police. Tactics were also talked.

Girders were found to put at the bottom of the barricade and palates were put on top. The girders had got really hot the previous night and couldn't be lifted out of the way. A posse went off around the pit top to look for some diesel. We came across security men. We pulled up our masks.

We could see the lights of the convoys of police vans on the horizon. Eleven vans to bring one scab in. A fence was ripped down to try and get a portakabin out to put right in between the gateposts. Two pickets kept a look out at a side road which led to some allotments. Dogs were barking up there so trouble could be coming. Three figures appeared – one look-out said that it was the lads so it was alright. But it wasn't the lads so it wasn't alright... Rows of shining riot helmets appeared, and dogs. Their leader shouted 'Get the bastards!'. They hesitated but we didn't and ran back to the picket hut. The rest of the pickets near the barricade were cut off as 120-150 riot clad police charged them. They scattered and ran but managed to throw a couple of cannisters on to the barricade which exploded once the police thought everything was over! It scared them to put it mildly! The pickets ran for hours, evading the beatings they would receive once captured. Not one was caught. This week Sussex were here – next week the Met is coming up! An FRFI supporter

THE FITZWILLIAM 9 TRIAL

'I am the judge and the jury'. These were the words spoken by stipendiary magistrate David Loy as he convicted seven of the Fitzwilliam 9, imprisoning Peter Hurst. The 9 were charged in connection with the incidents on 9 July when police stormed into the mining village of Fitzwilliam wreaking havoc in their wake. He said that this was a 'perfectly lawful operation' – a lawful operation that left three people needing hospital attention, one of whom was detained for three days, and another overnight with a head injury.

The trial in Pontefract Magistrates Court lasted two weeks, finishing on 14 December. The evidence put forward by the prosecution was on a political theme when questioning the defendants. The prosecutor asked them: 'Are you a member of any political organisation?', 'Do you go picketing?', 'were you at Orgreave?', 'are you a member of the NUM?', 'do you attend political meetings?'. He thus attempted to paint a picture of political subversion – a picture that the magistrate wished him to supply.

The defending counsels, Lord Gifford, Henry Spooner and Patrick Healey, found massive contradictions in the police evidence. During cross-examination:

- * the police were asked how was it that when the police came under a hail of missiles from 9.30pm that night to 11.15pm that night, no police officer was hit, and that only one was injured.
- * they were also asked to account for 15 truncheon marks on one defendant's back, when the police concerned claimed he was struck seven times on the front of his body. No marks were found on the front of his body. Medical evidence supported the theory that the defendant was restrained and thoroughly beaten by a number of assailants.
- * one police officer claimed that it was normal procedure to transfer a prisoner from one van to another by the

hair despite being handcuffed.

- * one police officer's notebook was doctored to corroborate evidence given against Peter Hurst.

After all this the magistrate sentenced as follows: Peter Hurst – six months imprisonment for threatening behaviour! Allen Hurst, Brendan Conway and Peter Doody – four months suspended for two years. Joenne Worth, Mary Ball and Lee Morris – bailed whilst social inquiry reports are made. Denis Doody, Brian Linley – acquitted. After the trial a press conference was called by FRFI and LPYS to tell the truth about 9 July.

We regard the sentence on Peter Hurst as a heartless and cruel deed. Both his wife and two young children are without a husband and father over the period of Xmas. We feel this deed is befitting of the type of society in which we live – oppose the state and you are immediately criminalised.

Lord Gifford remarked to an officer under cross-examination, 'you have no regard for either truth or accuracy', and in our opinion, neither did the stipen-

diary magistrate. He took the side of his employers, the state. He had every intention of assisting his masters in repressing a section of the working class now engaged in struggle against British imperialism. This type of action against our community will not serve to subdue us, it will only harden our resolve to overcome our enemy the present state. We call for all readers to support the struggle of the NUM, and the struggle of Peter Hurst and the 150 other miners in Armley Prison, Leeds at the moment and the comrades in Hemsworth and Fitzwilliam. A support group is being set up in Fitzwilliam by the relatives and by FRFI to defend the prisoners and to make sure they don't stand alone. It will be organising aid for the families, protests and support for the prisoners.

Denis

Send cards and messages of solidarity to Peter Hurst, HM Prison Armley, Armley Road, Leeds, LS12 2TJ.

Fight Racism— WE WILL FIGHT! WE WILL WIN! Manchester against deportations

Over 50 black people are deported from Britain every week. This racist onslaught against the black community can be fought successfully, and the Manchester campaigns against deportations are showing how! Over the recent period three campaigns have defeated Home Office attempts to enforce Britain's racist immigration controls. Through popular mobilisation in the community, organised street activity, demonstrations, rallies, petitions and approaches to a wide range of organisations and individuals, the Home Office has been forced to withdraw deportation orders against Manjit Kaur, Miebaka Brown and Esther Ankeli.

Manjit Kaur's victory

Manjit and her three year old daughter, Palbinder, were threatened with deportation. She was forced to leave her husband in 1981 because of his brutality and she moved into an Asian women's refuge. The racist Home Office showed its claws when Manjit was most vulnerable. She was stopped from claiming supplementary benefit and her passport was confiscated by the Home Office. In March 1983 Manjit was interviewed by Home Office interrogators and in December she was told she had no right to stay in this country. Then she was told she did not have the correct papers on entry. The appeal against her deportation showed that these papers had been filled in by her husband and the mistake was not hers.

Manjit and her supporters responded by organising the Manjit Kaur Defence Campaign and soon mobilised such widespread support that the Home Office was forced to retreat. The massive support she had in the local Sikh community was shown by the range of people, old and young, who demonstrated at her appeal. A petition of over 3,000 signatures was handed in and the campaign successfully demonstrated that the Home Office could be beaten. Like everyone else FRFI supporters who had supported the campaign and its last picket, were jubilant when under popular pressure the adjudicator acknowledged:

'The widespread support which is so marked a feature of this appeal, sincerely held and frankly expressed, reflects a widespread feeling that the

deportation offends the principle of fair play.'

These hypocritically 'humane' words were pulled from the adjudicator's mouth by the popular campaign and represent a victory for all black people facing constant racial harassment in this country. It is a victory also for all those who fought alongside her, including her lawyer Steve Cohen, and proof of the need for organised defence.

Another victory for Esther Ankeli

Esther had come to this country in 1977 to join her husband. She was constantly abused and mistreated by him and thus forced to leave him in 1981. Like Manjit, the Home Office pounced. She lost her appeal against a Home Office deportation order. The adjudicator agreed that there was evidence of persistent cruelty to Esther, yet despite this he found no compassionate grounds to allow her to stay. In his eyes Esther had to be dead or seriously injured to be granted compassionate reasons to remain in Britain! During this disgusting sham of an appeal, the Esther Ankeli Defence Campaign continued to organise and fight.

As a result Esther won! David Waddington recognising (reluctantly) the

widespread support Esther had, stated on local TV that her deportation would be 'unsuitable'. Undoubtedly it was the strength of her campaign which forced the Home Office to back down. Esther is now determined to support anyone else under threat of deportation.

The fightback continues

These victories are no reflection of the Home Office's sense of 'fair play' or democracy. It has none. With each victory, there are scores of additional black people targeted for deportation by the Home Office. Only a consistent, organised and popular struggle uniting all democrats, anti-racists and communists can ensure that the continuing fightback is successful. Until all immigration controls are torn from the statute book, the need to organise and fight against deportations remains an urgent task.

Viraj Mendis must stay!

Viraj, who is an FRFI supporter and has campaigned alongside those who have won, is himself threatened with deportation. He is now in particular danger because of the increasing repression by the Sri Lanka government against the island's Tamil people. Viraj has been a consistent supporter of the Tamil right to self determination. The Home Office wants to deport him to Sri Lanka despite the fact that he has lived in Britain for eleven years.

The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign has collected the first 10,000 signatures to a petition demanding that the threat of deportation is lifted. It is due to be handed in to Downing Street by Manchester council leader Graham Stringer and Viraj's MP Bob Litherland. The VMDC has set about collecting the next 10,000 signatures. The campaign of street meetings is proceeding with a successful one held in Liverpool on 1 December and several more planned in

Manchester and one in Birmingham. Viraj himself has just returned from a speaking tour in Scotland to mobilise support for the VMDC.

We urge all organisations to affiliate and support the campaign. Send letters of protest to David Waddington, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1. To contact the VMDC write to VMDC, c/o Box 38, 434 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN.

A new defence campaign for the Aslam family

The Aslam family, noting the VMDC's energetic and prominent campaign, approached it for support. Mr and Mrs Aslam who have lived in Britain for ten years and have three children all born here, are threatened with deportation. If the Home Office succeeds, it will not only destroy the Aslam family but also split them from Mrs Aslam's elderly parents both of whom are permanently resident here and dependent on the family.

The VMDC therefore assisted in the establishment of the Aslam Family Defence Campaign (AFDC) which has already started work and collected over 3,000 signatures to their petition. Campaign meetings are held regularly with over 30 people attending and its first public meeting in December attracted 150 people. On Saturday 15 December, the AFDC organised its first demonstration. Led by a contingent of Asian women, 250 people marched through Longsight to mobilise support in the community. FRFI supporters from Manchester, Leeds and Bradford joined those from the VMDC, the Pakistani Workers Association, Manchester NALGO, Manchester Polytechnic Students Union and Manchester University Miners' Support Group. At a rally in the town hall addressed by organisations supporting the demonstration, the overwhelmingly black audience gave a standing ovation to a speech in support of the miners' strike. FRFI is already affiliated to the AFDC and urges all other organisations and individuals to follow suit. The affiliation fee is £5 for local organisations and £10 for national ones. The AFDC urges all its supporters to write to the Home Office (address above) and contact it at AFDC c/o St John's Rectory, St John's Road, Longsight, Manchester 13.

IMMIGRATION CONTROLS: THE TRUTH CENSORED

After much delay the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has produced a long-awaited report which includes a section on Britain's immigration procedures. It will not be published until January 1985 because the Home Office is pressurising the CRE to re-write this section. Four years ago the government took the CRE to court over the report on immigration which exposed that vaginal examinations were being carried out on Asian women arriving at Heathrow Airport as part of checks into claims of being married to men resident in Britain. The Home Office has threatened to start legal proceedings again because it dislikes the findings of the CRE on the question of immigration controls.

These findings are the obvious ones, 'that an excessive emphasis on preventing breaches of immigration control by black people causes distress and humiliation to many with a legal right to live in Britain and does serious harm to race relations.' In other words, police and Home Office

'fishing-raids'—random harassment under the excuse of passport checks, is the regular and legal activity of the racist state.

The attack on the black community is being stepped up, as the proposed report states. The proportion of fiances refused entry rose from 7 per cent in the second quarter of 1983 to 83 per cent in the third quarter. The overall rate of refusals for husbands and fiances was 53 per cent and is rising fast as more cases are considered under the new rules of 'primary purpose'. (See FRFI 37).

This is a massive attack on the black community. It is cruel and divisive and continuing daily. The proposed CRE report would merely report on official policy—the covered-up version will lie. The truth continues to be told in Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! No section of the working class will be safe from attack by the state while apartheid immigration laws are allowed to continue unchallenged.

Susan Davidson

However fine the words of the left-wing Labour councillors, this struggle shows that the oppressed can rely securely only on their own organisation and their own power.

As the occupation continues, internationalism is coming to the fore as anti-apartheid, Palestine and Irish solidarity organisations and others extend support. After the march in a rousing celebration to conclude an evening's social, the audience joined in singing 'Mandela says fight for freedom' led off by FRFI and City AA supporters.

As members of the occupation say over and over again, 'These people want our help in a few months when they go to the people about rate-capping and defending Camden services against the Tories. If they want our help then they will have to help us now by meeting our demands.'

No more fine words. No more deathtrap accommodation. No more murders. End racist housing policies. Support the demands of the occupation.

Ainne, Eddie and Richard



Students say:

NO NF ORGANISERS

Two Polytechnic of North London students—John Leatham and Steve Tasane—were gaoled for two weeks on 28 November by Bow Street Magistrate's court. Their 'crime' had been to refuse to stop picketing Patrick Harrington, a National Front organiser who is also a student at the Poly. For ten months, students have been waging a campaign of occupations and pickets to prevent Harrington entering classes and to get him expelled from the Polytechnic. His presence there is an insult to the vast majority of students. Black and anti-racist students, in particular, are at risk from this NF organiser and his thugs. On a TV interview Harrington said:

'Black people cannot be citizens of Britain and therefore have no rights.'

The college director, David MacDowell, resigned rather than see him expelled.

During the course of their struggle, the students have been pitted against the British police and courts. As in the miners' strike, the forces of the state are being used to defend reaction and fascism. College buildings in Kentish Town and Holloway have been besieged by hundreds of police to ensure Harrington's 'safe passage'. Police clad in riot gear have broken into the campus using axes and sledgehammers. Court orders have been used to evict students from occupations in Kentish Town. While Harrington was led into his classes, the police denied entry to all other students until the fascist's class was over.

Anti-fascists have every right to organise and fight against fascists and prevent them gaining a foothold in student life. Yet the NUS Executive, dominated by the Labour Party has not only failed to defend the North London Poly students but actively attempted to undermine their struggle. On the day John

Leatham and Steve Tasane were sent to gaol, the NUS EC refused to give PNL students a platform on their massive demonstration against grant cuts. The NUS conference, once a bastion of the left, but now reflecting increasingly the narrow-minded selfishness of the privileged middle classes, refused to vote for a motion calling for the immediate release of the PNL 2. On the day the PNL 2 were released the NUS EC circulated a letter advising them not to attend the last picket of this term.

The PNL students fighting their battle represent some of the best in the student movement today. FRFI backs them 100% and is proud to have had its banner on pickets, demonstrations and other events organised by the students. Send messages of support to the Students Union, PNL, Prince of Wales Road, Kentish Town, London.

Maggie Mellon

Kamal Kumar Defence Campaign—the battle continues

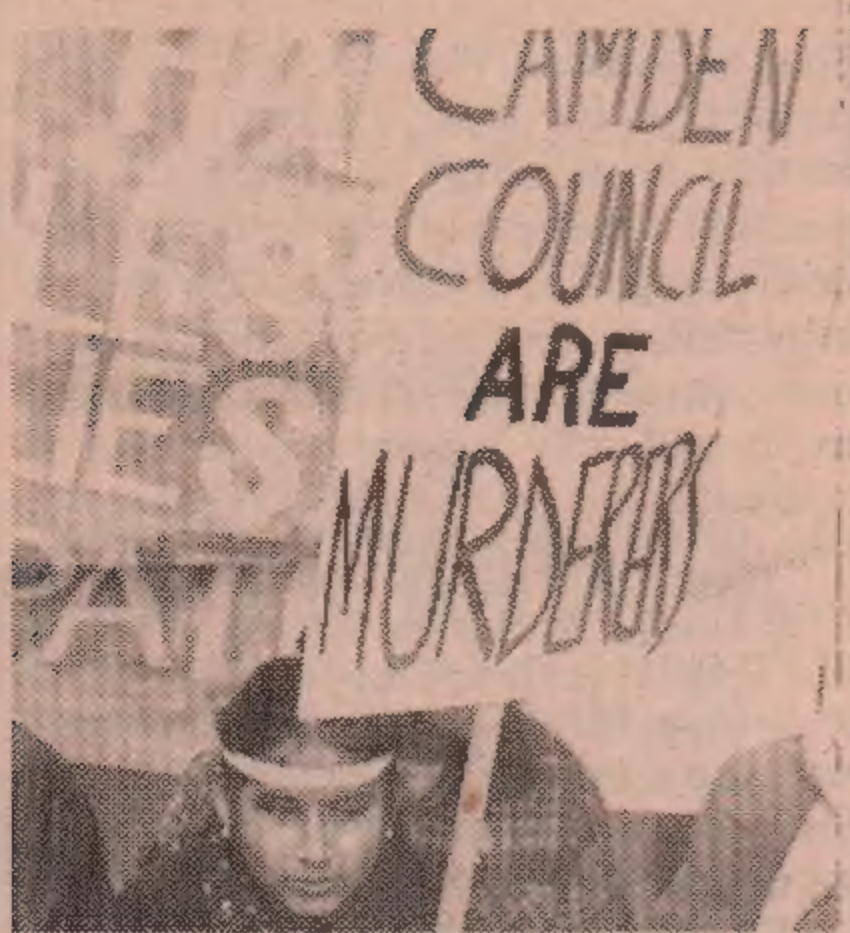
Kamal is an Indian born worker in Manchester. His marriage broke down while the Home Office took a year to consider his application to remain in Britain. The Home Office then used the pretext that not being married he had no right to remain and issued a deportation order. The Home Office in its onslaught on black people, capitalises on the misfortunes of those coming within its grasp. The campaign is fighting and can be contacted at Al Hilal Centre, 443 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester 8.

At the initiative of the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, a national demonstration and rally—'Fight Deportations! Fight Racism!'—will be held in Manchester in February. The event is being jointly organised by anti-deportation campaigns, the City Council and other organisations. It will bring together the victors, those still fighting and all those who are prepared to stand against the vile and racist Home Office and the British state's savage immigration controls.

Anwar

ACE KELLY WINS

On 10 June Ace Kelly of the SNHDC was walking home with his 6 year old daughter when he was violently arrested by Kennington Road police. They claimed he was abducting the child. He was charged with obstruction, assaulting the police and threatening behaviour. On 5 December a Horseferry Road magistrate decided that there was no case to answer on the obstruction and assault charges. The case was adjourned to 31 January when the charge of threatening behaviour will be heard.



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The occupation has become a centre and a focus for all those in struggle. A youth told FRFI: 'There is a fine spirit of revolution here.' And a black youth said to FRFI:

'The important aspect of this occupation is that black people have organised this, followed it through, and shown everyone that we are here to stay—and will stand up for our rights.'

ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVISTS CONVICTED

On Thursday 29 November 7 black and white youth were convicted by a stipendiary magistrate in Leeds of 'threatening and abusive behaviour' and 'obstruction' and received a £25 fine and 2 years conditional discharge. Another man was also found guilty of 'threatening and abusive behaviour', and additionally of 'assaulting a police officer' and was fined a total of £75.

The arrests took place when Stop the City protests were taking place in various parts of the city. Seven of the defendants - supporters of Park Lane College Anti-Apartheid Group and FRFI - were peacefully petitioning outside NEXT clothes against South African goods being sold in the shop.

In court the police invented a fantastic tale, claiming that there had been a gang of skinheads nearby whom the protesters were provoking, and that the petitioners had been 'jostling' into shoppers, 'chanting slogans' and 'shouting abuse'. Even the 2 'prosecution' witnesses denied all of this! Nevertheless the stipendiary magistrate rejected everyone's evidence except that of the police and found the defendants guilty on all charges.

On Friday 7 December, one of the defendants, an FRFI supporter, appeared in court again on charges relating to his arrest on 4 September during a picket of the court organised by the Stop The City Defence Campaign. He was arrested in a so-called 'Free Speech Area' while using a megaphone, and charged with breaking a local byelaw restricting the use of megaphones and also with 'blemishing the peace'. The prosecution dropped the charge of breaking the byelaw, but the defendant was bound over for a year.

David Jackson

INVITATION WITH MPC AND SOUTH AFRICA

In November racist South Africa's Multi Party Conference (MPC) issued a statement saying that if SWAPO did not join by 31 December then the MPC would 'negotiate Namibia's independence unilaterally with the South African government'. South Africa has also recently invited SWAPO to go to Namibia and vote on 'constitutional control' with the MPC. These proposed talks were according to Van Niekirk, the Administrator General in Namibia, to design the constitution for Namibia before its independence. SWAPO is completely opposed to this, and in a response broadcast on the Voice of Namibia said 'we are not prepared to associate ourselves with the crimes of the South African colonial oppression in their occupation of Namibia'. The so-called all-party meeting South Africa and the MPC wants is just another neo-colonial device to hinder the true independence of Namibia. SWAPO's response to this is 'The people of Namibia want peace and to be free in the country of their birth. Anything else other than that, the war will continue to escalate in Namibia until final victory is achieved'.

Nomsa Langa

SOUTH AFRICAN FRONT

On 29 October 9 members of Edinburgh Anti-Apartheid Group managed to enter an apartheid film show presented by a front organisation called the South African Reunion Club to advertise cut price holidays (for whites only) in the sun. Having given false names to the local rep, Mrs Glenys Reid Peters, and enduring the apartheid video nasty, we proceeded to wreck the serenity of the meeting by shouting about Sharpeville and Soweto, which didn't go down at all well with the forty strong blue-rinse brigade.

Most of us were assaulted by the South African thugs while being ejected from the hotel, but having successfully disrupted the fascists' meeting anti-fascists here are now defiant that scum like this will not appear publicly in Edinburgh again. Readers may like to contact the South African Reunion Club: for details of their forthcoming fascist gatherings phone them on: 01-370-8667.

Ian Maclean



POPEROTO

Embassy picket campaign gathers strength in US

A massive direct action campaign against apartheid has erupted in the US following a sit-in at the racist South African Embassy in Washington. On 21 November several prominent black leaders, including Representative Walter E Fauntroy, Mary Frances Barry - a US Civil Rights Commission member, were arrested when trying to protest against US collaboration with apartheid. Since then several more black leaders, including Congressmen, have been arrested outside the embassy.

Pickets are being held every afternoon outside the embassy and support groups have organised demonstrations in 12 other cities across the US, including New York, Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Houston. A series of national weeks of action will be held between 21 March and 6 April throughout the USA.

The racist Ambassador, like his counterpart in Britain, has complained about 'violations' of the 'sanctity' of his racist embassy and, just like in Britain, the police are collaborating in defending the apartheid diplomats. In addition to the Washington arrests, four black leaders in New York were arrested when attempting to present a list of demands to the US consulate there.

Many prominent black Americans have joined the protest, including Jesse Jackson, Coretta Scott King - widow of murdered Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, and Arthur Ashe the tennis star.

Dick Gregory, the black comedian, was arrested when he took part in the picket.

Black South African Bishop Desmond Tutu, winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, praised the protestors and told the congregation at Washington's National Cathedral that such protests are a source of hope to South Africa's 22 million blacks.

The huge support the protestors have won amongst black Americans proves how powerful an anti-apartheid movement can be when it joins up with the anti-racist struggle. As a result the media have given it substantial coverage.

'Can we abandon a country that has stood beside us in every war we ever fought, a country that is essential to the free world, that has minerals?'

Ronald Reagan

'You are either for or against apartheid, and not by rhetoric. You are either on the side of the oppressed or on the side of the oppressor. You can't be neutral.'

Bishop Desmond Tutu

Dunnes shows the way

13 shopworkers at the Henry St Dublin branch of Dunnes Stores have been on strike against apartheid since 19 July. The strike began when Mary Manning refused to serve a customer who wanted to buy two Outspan grapefruit. She was implementing the recently-adopted policy of her union - Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union (IDATU) - to boycott South African goods. Mary was suspended indefinitely without pay and 12 of her fellow-workers came out in support. In refusing to handle apartheid goods and defending a worker victimised for doing so, the Dunnes workers are showing the way for all workers opposed to the racist apartheid system.

On Saturday 8 December City AA organised a special picket of South Africa House in solidarity with the Dunnes strikers. Three IDATU members - Mary Manning, Karen Gearon and Brendan Archbold - took part. Brendan told the picket that 'the time for talking has gone. It's time to act.' Later Mary and Karen spoke to FRFI.

They told us that when the strike began they knew very little about apartheid but said Karen 'Now we do know we're more committed than ever.' Mary said 'I will never handle South African goods again.' The strikers picket the store every day with a mass picket every

Saturday. The Saturday pickets are supported by Irish AAM, trade unionists, political organisations and others. They say that the most consistent support comes from Sinn Fein.

Despite management efforts to undermine the pickets, they have reduced sales in the store by 50-60%. The latest trick by Ben Dunne - owner of Dunnes Stores - is to put all cheap EEC butter into the Henry St store to force the poor to cross the picket line. Karen said that 3,000 protest letters had been sent to Ben Dunne demanding the right of workers to refuse to handle apartheid goods.

As may be expected, the gardai regu-

larly harass the pickets and arrested one striker in October. The strikers themselves are living on IR£21 per week strike pay. But the harassment, the sacking, the loss of badly-needed income have all failed to break the spirit of the strikers. Both Mary and Karen said that they would rather lose their jobs than handle apartheid goods. Mary said 'I have a right to refuse to take part in a crime.'

FRFI calls on all readers to support the Dunnes strikers. British trade unionists should follow their example and refuse to handle the bloodstained produce of apartheid. Such a step alongside the consumer boycott could build a real community struggle against apartheid. The Dunnes workers have taken the first step. Brendan Archbold's words are true for all concerned in the fight against apartheid: 'the time for talking has gone. It's time to act.'

120 US corporations have pledged that they will 'support the ending of apartheid laws'. This mere promise is just a verbal reaction to the rising tide of protest in South Africa and the US. The US monopolies hope that by giving a little to the South African blacks, the South African government can prevent the people of South Africa from taking the lot - all the \$14bn of investment built on decades of racist and imperialist exploitation.

At the same time, the Reagan administration has been forced on the defensive, trying to pretend that its cosyng-up to Botha is somehow changing apartheid.

It is essential that anti-apartheid activists in Britain use this development to help build an anti-racist, anti-apartheid movement in Britain, by publicising the Washington picket and giving it solidarity:

- * Send messages of support to the Washington Embassy Picket, c/o TransAfrica, 545 8th Street, SE, Washington DC 20003, USA
- * send letters of protest to the US Ambassador in Britain, US Embassy, 24 Grosvenor Square, London W1, condemning US collaboration with apartheid and the arrests of protestors
- * pass motions calling on the AAM executive committee to protest to the US Ambassador about the arrests and police harassment of the picket
- * call meetings jointly with local black organisations to show support for the campaign
- * publicise the events in the US in local black newspapers and radio programmes.

Steve Palmer

'Can we abandon a country that has stood beside us in every war we ever fought, a country that is essential to the free world, that has minerals?'

Ronald Reagan

'You are either for or against apartheid, and not by rhetoric. You are either on the side of the oppressed or on the side of the oppressor. You can't be neutral.'

Bishop Desmond Tutu

DODGING THE BOYCOTT

The AAM AGM passed a resolution placing the Boycott Campaign at the centre of its 1985 activities. Unfortunately, the first meeting of the new National Committee (NC) on 1 December was not able to deal seriously with the issue. Instead of being given pride of place, the Campaign was relegated to 7th place on the meeting's agenda. Compounded by poor chairing, what should have been the most important discussion of the day received 10-15 minutes desultory consideration late in the day. Local and affiliated groups were not able to suggest ideas and discuss or co-ordinate plans in order to maximise impact. In what amounted to an anti-democratic insult to the NC, it was presented with already printed and distributed leaflets announcing the 9 February 1985 Boycott conference agenda. The NC and local groups were thus denied the chance to democratically discuss and improve it.

Despite this, City AA and FRFI comrades active throughout the country will continue to discuss and prepare for an imaginative, effective and vigorous boycott campaign.

The Executive Committee (EC) which is responsible for preparing the meeting, was happier wasting NC time in prosecuting its campaign against City AA. A particularly flagrant example referred to the 24 March 1983 City AA local demonstration, from Hackney to the South African embassy, organised as part of its campaign during the AAM Month of Action. The EC report states that City AA:

'... ignored a direct request from the AAM EC not to proceed with (it)... despite decisions by both the NC and the AGM that a demonstration should not be organised at that time.'

This is less than the truth. A rumour campaign was orchestrated suggesting that City AA was contravening AAM AGM decisions. The 1983 AAM AGM voted against a national demonstration and called on activists to organise local activities for the Month of Action. This is exactly what City AA did. Only those with the narrowest horizons, defined by four walls of a room, could mistake the demonstration from Hackney to Trafalgar Square for a national one.

In another disgraceful move, the NC voted against an application from the South African Embassy Picket Campaign (SAEPC) to affiliate to the AAM. This was on the recommendation of the EC, despite the fact that the SAEPC has won back the right to picket the South African embassy and despite the fact that its campaign to close down the embassy is in accord with AAM policy.

As a result the SAEPC was the only organisation out of a long list of applicants denied affiliation. It made no difference that of all these, the SAEPC was the only one engaged in an active campaign involving hundreds of youth, black people, peace activists, women's groups, political and trade union organisations. In attempting to cover up this sectarian and divisive action, the NC witnessed a particularly embarrassing interlude. City AA representatives demanded to know whether the movement's credentials committee had examined the SAEPC application. Rather hastily, Vella Pillay, a chairperson, said yes. Fearing this lie could easily be exposed in the future, Mike Terry moved in to 'correct' the error stating that there was no need for the credentials committee to meet.

The final item for the day was to be an address by an ANC speaker on developments in South Africa. Already running over time, delegates had started to leave, breaking into conversation as the ANC speaker began. The meeting had to be called to order. There was unfortunately no time for discussion or questions. And so ended the day's business.

Eddie Abrahams

***Donations, messages of support etc can be sent to IDATU, O'Lehane House, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1, Ireland.**

Terry O'Halloran



● Nothing changes No 565: In the 1926 miners' strike a miner was arrested and summonsed for selling 'Northern Light', the journal of the Council of Action at Chopwell. In order to demonstrate the scurrilous and seditious nature of the publication the prosecutor read out the following passage about our friends in blue: 'The lowest aim in life is to be a policeman. When a policeman dies he goes so low he has to climb up a ladder to get into hell and even then he is not a welcome guest' (much hilarity in the court room).

The striking miner was sentenced to three months hard labour.

● A uniformed London policeman who assaulted a youth 'while smelling of drink' was given a six month suspended gaol sentence at Knightsbridge Crown Court. PC Peter Waterton, 24, was told by the judge, 'This means an end to your police career. What you did is deeply disturbing at a time when public confidence in the police is constantly being attacked' (you bet).

The court heard that Waterton drove his police Rover on to the pavement in front of two youths, leapt out and, without provocation, punched one of them. With sweet understatement his colleague, PC John Ball said, 'I didn't feel he was handling the situation correctly'.

● Don't say boo to a goose, don't say miaow to a police dog, and heaven knows don't snort like a pig at a policeman (it may carry the death penalty). 18-year-old unemployed Lawrence O'Dowd was with a group of friends when approached by a Sergeant Taylor (with his dog, Peel) who told them to move on. Sgt Taylor alleges that O'Dowd looked straight at the police dog (Peel) and miaowed. Sgt Taylor said that in the situation he regarded the word 'miaow' as abusive and charged O'Dowd with using threatening and abusive words and behaviour. Lawrence, who was fined £100 and bound over for two years by York Magistrates, said after the hearing: 'I just can't believe it'. Nor can we Lawrence, nor can we.

● The Starsky and Hutch syndrome is badly affecting Metropolitan police drivers. A recent report shows that since 1981 28 people, 21 of them members of the public, have been killed in accidents in or with police cars. Anyone who sees the flashing, screaming police cars careering up the wrong side of London's roads will not be surprised by the figures. The worst accident was in Ruislip in 1982 when a police car travelling at speeds of 'up to 100 mph' hit a car containing four young people killing them all and one policeman. A separate Home Office sponsored study said in 1983 that 'a considerable amount of police behaviour can best be understood as a search for some interest, excitement and sensation'. Reckless driving was one such example but, needless to say, the psychologically immature filth don't receive the same consequences as the public when they kill people on the roads. Of course police are subject to the same laws as anybody else (says a commentary on the report) 'but there's no evidence of police drivers involved in accidents receiving the heavy fines or imprisonment for dangerous driving which would clearly happen if they were civilians.' A transfer to other duties (on the picket line?) is the most common result of DPP prosecutions.

Notes and Comments

FORDS WOMEN ON STRIKE

370 women at Ford's Dagenham and Halewood plants are on strike in an attempt to force through recommendations made by a court of inquiry 16 years ago. The women, who are machinists employed in sewing seat covers, are Grade B workers, and are treated as unskilled. Upgrading would mean a pay increase of £6.50—but the strike is also for recognition of the women's skilled status. It takes four months to train a machinist, and her pay is less than that of a janitor.

To this blatant injustice, insult and injury are added. The women's action coincides with the adoption of a pay agreement, which has been held up as almost 40,000 other workers have been laid off, with loss of production estimated at £180m. Shop stewards have pledged an all-out strike if jobs are threatened, but have yet to support the women's pickets. Despite the 'full support' of TGWU leader Ron Todd, the strike was not given official backing for almost three weeks.

The contribution women have made to the miners' strike is invaluable—how long before the TGWU recognise the need to support this women's intervention instead of collaborating with the management and the media in forcing them back to work? Beth Summers

HANDS OFF THE T&G!

The Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) are still refusing to pay the £200,000 fine imposed on it by the courts as a result of the new Tory Trade Union Act. The fine arose when the union backed its members' strike at Austin-Rover. The strike was called by a vote at a mass meeting and not by a secret ballot demanded by the Act.

After the TGWU Executive Council meeting in December Ron Todd, general-secretary elect made the position quite clear 'We will not pay the fines' he said, 'Our policy is that we oppose the government legislation—and that means all aspects of government legislation.'

This uncompromising position put the ball right back into the High Court. On 11 December the court dragged up the feudal office holder of the 'Queens Remembrancer' to collect the cash. How this gentleman will actually go about doing it is open to speculation. Naturally enough, the man in question is firmly from the establishment. John Roger Bickford-Smith was educated at Eton and Oxford, fought in Burma and India and appropriately enough is a member of the Garrick club—normally the haunt of actors!

However underneath the cover of this ceremonial office lies the serious attack that the government has launched on the democratic rights of trade unions. The TGWU's principled stand must be supported by all inside and outside the trade union movement.

John Strawson

THE REAL SCROUNGERS

The Tory government and the servile hacks of Fleet Street have launched another attack on claimants, in particular unemployed youth. Social Services Secretary Norman Fowler accuses them of seeking 'holidays on the dole'. His aim is to cut board and lodging payments by £70m, and to cover up earlier decisions by his own department. These allowed private nursing home owners to extract additional rent worth £100m annually from the DHSS.

Far from scrounging holidays from the state, millions of pensioners and unemployed or disabled people are suffering from benefit cuts. For example, a couple on Invalidity Benefit are £328 a year poorer after Tory rule changes. Striking miners and their families have lost £1 a week. Yet the rich continue to get richer: by 1982, the richest 1% of the population owned 21% of all marketable wealth, and the top 50% owned 96%. Help for the rich is generous: the top 1% of taxpayers got 44% of the £4.17 billion given away in 1984 tax changes. The bottom 25% got only 3%.

When governments preach about cuts 'in the national interest', they mean: in the interests of the ruling class. While Keith Joseph withdraws £39m of student grant cuts since bourgeois pockets suffer, £190m of housing benefit cuts remain unopposed. No expense is spared to further private profit. City brokers picked up £127m in commissions on the Telecom sale, and wage-cutting contractors squeeze millions from NHS privatisation. These are the real scroungers and parasites.

Dave Burton

BLIND WORKERS SACKED

Sheltered workshops for the blind are what they sound to be: charitable institutions providing manual, low-paid and repetitive jobs for the blind and partially sighted. Yet, the government is now attacking these workshops and factories, calling for 'self-sufficiency' and cost-effective measures to be introduced.

Since the London Association for the Blind (LAB) one year ago, employed Roger Adams as production manager there have been several votes of 'no confidence' in his ability to manage from the branch of the National League of the Blind and Disabled. Complaints of gross violations of health and safety standards have been lodged by the work force in June and July 1984.

At the union meeting on 6 July, it was agreed to carry out a safety check during the night-shift that night. Five representatives of the union went to the LAB factory in Verney Road, SE16 where they found all the gates and doors wide open. Gangways, staircases, and fire-escapes were blocked and the charge-hand was a trainee. They were accused by those in charge of the shift of being under the influence of alcohol and being abusive. And on the following Monday morning, the five were suspended, pending investigation.

On 30 July, George Simmons and David

Thomas were sacked, Dafton Robinson (senior shop-steward and health and safety officer), David Meen and James Cuthbert were disciplined. At the appeals hearing, the prosecutor was yet again Roger Adams, and the others on the board were all LAB councillors. An individual tribunal hearing called for 17 December has been postponed until February. The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) have taken up the case and are urging various councils to discuss the future of 'capitation' grants to the LAB whose budget is £1.5 million a year, ¾ of which is provided by Southwark, Lambeth, Lewisham, Greenwich, Islington and Wandsworth.

Please write letters of protest, and demand the dropping of all action against the five people dismissed or disciplined, to the Director—Mr G Entwistle, or to Mr Rex Bates the chair of the LAB Council at London Association for the Blind, 14—16 Verney Road, London SE16 3DZ. Also write to the councils mentioned above. The workers are also calling for a trades boycott of the factory which produces many items of plastic or PVC welding. For further information, contact Roger Sutton or Rob Smith, GFTU, Central House, Upper Woburn Place, London WC1, or Bill McCready, c/o GWB, 37—55 Ashburton Grove, London N7.

Ken Hughes

WOMEN AGAINST PIT CLOSURES

Betty—Grimethorpe:

'I wonder if the people who assess the needs of the so-called working classes are aware of the chasm they have created by their self-indulgent feelings, their economically orientated mentality, their self-assumed superiority. Well, let me convey my beliefs too.

We are superior mentally and physically; mentally, for our minds are not deadened by soft living and smug self satisfaction, physically, because we are used to hard work—no au pairs, dailies, and nursing homes for our parents. Morally, because we do what we do in the belief in our own kind, and in the knowledge and pride that naturally follows when you know your fight is just....'

Women on the march

'...As we all stood on the stage, the sight and sound of all the women singing, chanting and shouting filled the hall. Different accents, different banners—rows and rows of them; Welsh, Kent, Durham, Barnsley, Sheffield, Staffordshire, went on for ever, it seemed. Both on the stage and off, women were crying with emotion.

As I stood there looking at them I thought to myself—"We can't and won't lose anything, let along this strike, with women like these fighting together."

'Women Against Pit Closures' is a powerful and moving account of the development of a fighting working class women's movement.

Buy it, price £1.50 (p&p 50p extra), from Barnsley Women Against Pit Closures, c/o WCC St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield.

HOSPITAL WORKERS SUPPORT MINERS

On 13 July a group of workers from North Manchester General Hospital mounted a picket in support of the miners on the day of action called by the NW Confederation of Trade Unions. The picket which began at 6am received considerable support from those going to work. The police arrived at 8am and began to push the pickets around but did not at this time make any arrests and went away. About an hour and a half later they returned in a van and without warning made straight for one of the pickets (a known activist within the hospital), frog-marched her about 20 yards from the hospital entrance to the main road and then charged her with obstruction of the public highway! Two other pickets, attempting to find out what was happening were also charged, one with obstruction, the other with assault on a police officer. (This for

putting a hand on a policeman's arm when trying to talk to him). Numbers were not visible, and it was significant that a white-coated individual who had joined the picket 10 minutes before the arrival of the police and was known to no one else was later seen leaving with the police. When the news of the arrests spread round the hospital, a large number of those at work came out to join the picket, outraged at the police behaviour.

Both the committal proceedings on 23 July and the court case itself on 16 October were marked with demonstrations of over 80 people, including hospital workers, striking miners, and FRFI supporters. Given this level of support, the police did not dare to press charges against the three, who agreed, on legal advice, to be bound over for one year, while in no way admitting the validity of the charges.

Geoff Boyd N Manchester General Hospital

THE GREAT BRITISH TELECON SALE

The sale of the century is over. British Telecom now belongs to us the great British public, and as we are all partners in this great capitalist adventure, we'll all reap the benefits. Some more than others.

Like BT's directors for instance. They've all signed new contracts, before the shares sale! Keeping them on the board until they're 80. The chairman Sir George Jefferson will get £94,000 this year, up 63% since 1982. The average salary of the ten executive directors this year is £59,000, a rise of about 36% over last year. One of the first things the BT board intends to do after the sale of shares is to 'implement substantial increases in the salaries of the executive directors to levels commensurate with those prevailing in other commercial companies.' A guide to what these 'commensurate levels' are is that the chairman of STC, one of BT's main competitors, got £201,000 last year!

Somebody else to reap the benefits, thanks to their efforts on behalf of the Tory party, is Saatchi and Saatchi. One of their subsidiaries, Dorlands, was involved in the

Telecom advertising campaign. About £17.5m is estimated to have been spent on advertising and marketing costs alone. The City of London financial institutions have not been left out when it comes to reaping the benefits. The various merchant banks, accountants, solicitors and other professional parasites should make about £120m from underwriting the shares sale, selling the shares out and 'advising' the government. In fact the government has spent in all the sum of £323 million inducing the public to buy BT shares; this includes free shares and discounts to BT employees, and the cost of free telephone vouchers and bonus shares.

BT workers will also be reaping the benefits. They've all had the opportunity to accept £70 worth of free shares and buy more at a cheap rate. Now they're fully-fledged partners in the new privatised but publicly owned(?) BT the benefits are beginning to appear. As a Tory Telecom expert put it, 'There is scope for either a reduction of 50,000 to 60,000 further jobs to get the level of efficiency that ought to be achieved, or BT has to expand its markets to avoid redundancies on that scale.'

Bob Shepherd

POLICE ATTACK ENDS OCCUPATION AT ST ANDREWS

FRFI was at the occupation of St Andrews Hospital Casualty wing in Newham on 22 November. There was a heavy police presence. Mothers from Colodon School, Poplar, E15, told us they had occupied the casualty wing all night but had left to take their children to school. One mother said: 'We started demonstrating on 18 November (last Friday) at 4pm when we first heard of it. Local people first heard we were to lose St Andrews casualty when they put leaflets through a few doors a few days before it happened!'

The casualty ward was officially supposed to shut at 8am that morning (22 November), but at 9.30pm the night before, the women had forced the locked doors open to occupy the wing. 'When we demonstrated before outside Poplar Hospital we were guaranteed the St Andrews would stay open. Mile End Hospital goes next year.'

Colodon Street School and Residents of Aberfeldy Street, Poplar, donated food to keep the women occupying the premises going. This morning the management nailed up the windows to stop food being passed in or people inside talking to reporters or anyone outside.

At 11.30am, 22 November, the police violently ejected some people who had refused to leave casualty. One man was dropped on his head on to concrete as they were all carried out of the building. He lay unconscious in the rain for half an hour before an ambulance arrived to take him to far off Hackney Hospital. A woman screamed at the police, 'You bastards, you bastards!' as she too was carried out and dumped unceremoniously on the concrete.

Closing St Andrews casualty means even greater hardship for families. Mile End and the London Hospital are trying to cope with an area that encompasses Wapping, Aldgate, Stepney, Bow and Poplar. One woman said: 'We can't afford the fare there anyway.'

Ainne Fury

GAYS FIGHT ATTACKS

Vigorous protests have taken place following the decision by Tory-controlled Rugby Council to scrap a guarantee that it will not discriminate against job applicants who are lesbian or gay. The council did not want to give people 'the idea that it positively welcomed queers and perverts', said foul-mouthed bigot Councillor Judge. On 10 November a militant march, of over 1,000 people demonstrated the widespread opposition to the move. NALGO supported the march. 10 men and 8 women were arrested when police attacked a group of marchers after trying to seize the Gay Youth Movement banner.

Gay's the Word Bookshop represents not only an open expression of Gay culture but a community resource for Gay men and women all over London. The raid by HM Customs on 10 April threatened the very existence of this bookshop and is a direct attack on all openly gay people. Seen in a wider context it is only one of a series of raids this year on gay bookshops such as Lavender Menace in Edinburgh, and gay pubs such as 'The Bell' where 50 officers were involved.

The law, with the complicity of the media, is seeking to further criminalise men and women for being gay. They now have a new ally in HM Customs. The Customs Consolidation Act 1876 is being used to prohibit 'indecent or obscene articles' with no statutory definition of the terms. HM Customs have decided that it is indecent and obscene to be gay and have a vast array of powers at their disposal. They can search anywhere, any time for 'prohibited' goods (they decide what's prohibited) and they can freely open all mail coming into this country including private letters. They can also keep detained items forever if they wish.

On 7 January next year the 8 directors and one worker of Gay's the Word will appear at Clerkenwell Magistrates Court to answer charges of 'conspiracy to import obscene material. Every member of the gay community must support Gay's the Word. Straight people too must support this campaign otherwise soon you will hear a knock on the door and it will be Customs and Excise come to look in your bookcase backed up by British courts ready and willing to bring conspiracy charges against you.

Donations and messages of support to: Defend Gay's the Word Campaign, 38, Mount Pleasant WC1 0AP.

Richard Roques and David Jackson

GRENADA

The Times headlines it 'A vote for the big paymaster' adding 'It should give encouragement to the wider struggle of the free world to contain the global advance of communist dictatorship'. The Economist concluded 'The little Caribbean island states are sleeping more easily'. The New National Party (NNP), formed by the US four months ago with Tom Adams of Barbados in attendance, had won the 3 December elections with Herbert Blaize, a former Prime Minister under British colonial rule, as its head. Its electoral campaign was paid for by the US. Taxi drivers were given up to \$130 a trip to take NNP voters to the polls. Free gifts littered their campaign trail. The days of 'rum and corned-beef' elections were back in style. As one US Congressman put it 'We've just bought ourselves another Puerto Rico'.

Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement leader Kendrick Radix denounced the elections as fraudulent. Reagan called them 'an achievement of historic importance'. Blaize's first act was to write a thank you letter to Reagan. His first pronouncement was a request that the US and Caribbean occupation forces remain on the island. The slave mentality is back on top, but the spirit of Maurice Bishop will fuel and direct the anger of the people. Trevor Rayne

CHILE - THE PEOPLE WILL DECIDE

Two days of protest against the military dictatorship took place on 27 and 28 November. Chile has been under a state of siege, which allows arbitrary arrest, strict censorship, and use of troops as police, since November 6. On several occasions troops have rounded up thousands of people in the shanty towns of Santiago under the pretext of 'fighting terrorism'. Many middle and upper level organisers of left-wing parties, labour organisations and slum organisations were arrested. Over 500 have been sent into internal exile in the deserts of Chile. This move is an attempt by the dictatorship to dismantle the organisations of the democratic movement.

The protests of November were at a lower level than before because of the massive military presence but in the shanty town of La Victoria, scene of previous raids, youth fought troops from behind barricades with petrol bombs and rocks. Armed actions were carried out, with 15 bombings in Santiago over the 2 days and other bombings in the towns of Serena and Valparaiso. Armed actions have increased over the last 2 months. Some members of the opposition have spoken of a 'Salvadorisation' process beginning in Chile. The people, denied their democratic rights, have no option but to turn to mass action and armed struggle. With the continued isolation of the regime from any civilian support, the state of siege has merely bought more time for the regime. Nigel Doyle

King Hussein's claw at Palestine's heart

This year's Palestine National Council (PNC) - the Palestinian parliament in exile - held recently in Amman, the Jordanian capital, was an extraordinary event. For the first time ever, it failed to represent all the trends within the Palestinian liberation movement. Convened unilaterally by Yassir Arafat's supporters in Al Fatah, the PNC only just managed to achieve its required quorum. The PLO's communist organisations - the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Palestinian Communist Party (PCP) - refused to participate in a meeting hosted by King Hussein of Jordan. They pointed out that this move would be a further step in entrapping the PLO leadership into the pro-imperialist alliance Hussein is currently constructing. The pro-Syrian organisations within the PLO also boycotted the PNC.

A representative of the reactionary Arab bourgeoisie and a firm ally of US imperialism, Hussein has attempted to usurp the PLO's position as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Earlier this year he reconvened the pre-1967 Jordanian Parliament with its representation from the West Bank, to prepare it to speak on behalf of the Palestinian people. More recently, Hussein has re-established relations with the treacherous Mubarak regime in Egypt. This regime is hated by the Palestinian and Arab masses for its betrayal of the Palestinian revolution, when Mubarak's predecessor Sadat

signed a peace treaty with Israel. Hussein was also responsible for Black September 1970, when thousands of Palestinians were killed as the King's army drove the PLO out of Jordan.

Hussein was nevertheless invited to address the PNC's opening session. Recognising the Arafat leadership's increasing readiness to trust in imperialist plans for Palestine, he proposed a joint Jordanian-PLO initiative to negotiate 'peace' with Zionism and imperialism. He also urged the acceptance of UN Resolution 242 which recognises Israel, but not the PLO and refers to the Palestinians only as refugees. Offering

the prospect of an imperialist settlement of the Palestinian question, Hussein is hoping the PLO will abandon the armed struggle. Reaction then will be in a better position to destroy the Palestinian revolution.

The Palestinian masses and their revolutionary vanguard cannot however have any illusions in a progressive role for imperialism. Neither can they have any illusions in the likes of Hussein and Mubarak. The treacherous indifference of the Arab bourgeoisie when the US-armed Israeli forces slaughtered thousands of their people in 1982 is still a vivid memory. The billions of dollars worth of military aid the USA provides to Israel in order to carry out its genocide against the Palestinian people is a fact the oppressed cannot ignore.

Whilst the imperialists in alliance with Jordan and in manoeuvres with Syria try to seduce the PLO into the impotent 'corridors of power', the Palestinian masses know that only uncompromising opposition to imperialism will liberate them from oppression. In the West Bank, in the Gaza Strip, in South Lebanon and in 'Israel' itself, they are continuing their armed and popular struggle.

Eddie Abrahams

Tamil people fight on

On 4 December the Sri Lankan Army cold-bloodedly murdered at least 102 people - mostly Tamil civilians. The army went on the rampage - burning down houses with Tamil people still in them and raping women before killing them. After three days of denials even official government sources were forced to admit the latest massacre.

The second half of November has seen the struggle of the Tamil people against the armed forces of the racist Sri Lankan regime steadily escalate. The events of 4 December were a 'reprisal' for the Tamil guerrilla's successful attack on an army convoy killing one soldier. The Tamil people are fighting for a separate state Eelam in the North and East of the island - free from racist rule.

Against them the regime has used repressive measures like a 42 hour curfew with shoot on sight instructions. The government have declared a one-mile wide 'security zone' round 150 miles of the Eelam coastline, displacing many

Tamil families. Massive house-to-house raids have taken place with over 375 arrests of 'suspected terrorists' - some of whom have been killed. The army has also been doubled in size. US and British imperialism are totally backing the regime in Sri Lanka. The British government is giving aid of £5.5m to extend Colombo Airport to cater for 'new needs'. US trouble-shooter ex-CIA General Walters visited Sri Lanka to advise the regime.

But the imperialist-backed state terror has not succeeded in destroying the Tamil people's struggle. On the contrary it has strengthened the fightback

and unified the Tamil people behind the freedom fighters. Even the National Security minister indirectly acknowledged this unity of the Tamil masses with the freedom fighters, when he said:

'Who is a terrorist? Is it the person who uses the gun? or is he also not a terrorist who accompanies a terrorist with a gun? Is he also not a terrorist who gives a house to a person who has a gun and wants to kill? Is he also not a terrorist who watches the movement of the army and then goes and tells a terrorist: do not go that way, the army is around?'

Such is the mentality of a frightened government. Walters' visit, British imperialism's donations express real fear: the liberation forces already control half the country.

Viraj Mendis

'Socialists' invite NATO to Spain

The major Spanish Socialist Workers' Party PSOE slogan for the 1982 general election was 'For a change' and 'NATO-No!' which 10 million people interpreted, in view of PSOE's electoral promises as a change towards a more progressive government and the liberalisation of certain anti-social laws. The lesson for the 10 million PSOE voters that placed the party in government with an absolute majority has been, as always, that social democrat governments serve the capitalist system and only the capitalist system whether through fear, opportunism or conviction. Historic factors suggest that in the case of the PSOE the second factor has dominated: it only needs to be remembered that PSOE members had participated in anti-fascist struggles during the Franco dictatorship and that their electoral promises had a progressive tinge: no to NATO membership, 800,000 new jobs, hints for a law legalising abortion and the development of limited autonomy in local government.

As far as their NATO promises were concerned George Shultz, US Secretary of State, arrived from Washington a couple of weeks after the elections to assure himself that the 'change' as far as NATO and defence policy was concerned would not be 'inconvenient'. The PSOE tried to forget the promised referendum on NATO membership, despite a clear majority in opinion polls

favouring withdrawal.

The huge demonstrations - the last in June this year united half a million people - have forced the PSOE to face the issue, although they now claim that the referendum will only have a consultative and not a law-binding nature. The PSOE tried to gain support by freezing negotiations concerning Spanish integration into NATO's military command

but have not prevented participation in key NATO committees, attendance by Spanish army officers at NATO strategy courses, adaptation of Spain's armed forces to NATO specifications, etc. Finally they have cynically presented NATO membership as the 'price to pay' for EEC membership. Spanish Prime Minister and PSOE Secretary-General, Gonzalez has threatened to resign if he loses the NATO vote at this December's PSOE Congress: 'I believe in maintaining the status quo says Gonzalez in defence of NATO membership against a sizeable and increasingly disenchanted faction of his party.

The PSOE has also found it convenient, whilst organising its own peace movements and making dove-like speeches to promote the arms industry. Amongst Spain's customers may be found Uruguay, Chile, Indonesia and Honduras. The government naturally utilizes the argument that the arms industry creates employment but Defence Minister Narcis Serra has had to stoop low to acquire joint arms production agreements and contracts for Spain's weapons industry, claiming that

'Spain identifies herself totally with the defence of the values of Western society'.

Previous Spanish defence policy centred on possible attacks by North African countries and on the defence of Spain's colonies Ceuta and Melilla on Moroccan territory. The Warsaw Treaty countries are now, however, considered to be the major enemy, defence policy being geared towards control tactics and manoeuvres with these countries in mind. An example is the recent manoeuvres in the Straits of Gibraltar in which Spanish naval vessels minutely registered shipping movements, obviously with the movement of the major Soviet Fleet in the Black Sea as their ultimate target.

Having acquired the votes of ten million people through an anti-NATO neutral defence policy election campaign, the PSOE has, once in power, encouraged pro-US relations, maintained Spain's membership of NATO, and thereby adopted a clearly pro-Western stance in her defence policy.

Helen

Bhopal

continued from page 1

Union Carbide's murderous profiteering operations are not only confined to India. In Indonesia 402 out of 750 employees in a Union Carbide-owned battery factory were found to be suffering from kidney disease. Union Carbide also has extensive chrome mining operations in apartheid South Africa. In 1976 it was found that all but 10% of their African employees had less than the minimum health and decent living standards of a typical South African family. The company has also persistently lobbied the US Congress to break UN sanctions and allow chrome to be shipped from South Africa.

Transnational companies such as Union Carbide are attracted to invest in poor nations by the cheap labour available. Imperialism enjoys the facility of having a massive reserve army of labour available - their lives are, as has been shown, quite literally expendable in the interests of making enormous profits.

Coming so soon after the horrific gas blast in Mexico City, the terrible events in Bhopal confirm that we can expect these horrors to continue in the oppressed nations. The people will not be able to rest until the robber transnationals and their local hosts are thrown out. In Bhopal itself, the demonstrators who chanted 'Hang Anderson' (the American boss of Union Carbide) outside the company's guest house, signalled that the people will only be satisfied with the most exemplary punishment of these criminals.

Bill Hughes

VICTORY TO THE SANDINISTAS

FRFI's persistent efforts to mobilise those opposed to US imperialism's threat to the Nicaraguan revolution brought about the setting up of the Nicaragua Action Group to organise activities to protest about US plans to invade Nicaragua.

The first activity was a picket outside the US consulate on Friday 23 November which lasted for two hours. Despite an attempted fascist attack and feeble attempts by the police to move the picket across the road the 20 strong picket remained where it was and our militant chanting included: Victory to the Sandinistas! Hands off Nicaragua!

It was decided at NAG to make the pickets weekly events. At the second picket the police had instructions to prevent the picket taking place directly outside the consulate and told us if we attempted to demonstrate on the pavement we would be arrested for obstruction. However, we were determined we wouldn't be moved. The police, obviously unaware of our determination, thought it would be a simple matter of dragging us across the road. As soon as they moved us we went back and they unsuccessfully attempted to move us again. Eventually they gave up and we won the right to demonstrate outside the consulate. The prevalent atmosphere was one of lively determination. Everyone joined in the chants and singing which was accompanied by the drums and whistles of women from Greenham Common.

The third and recent picket again defeated police attempts to move us. 30 people expressed their anger at US plans to invade Nicaragua and FRFI speakers and others denounced police collaboration with US imperialism. The picket ended with loud singing of 'Which side are you on?' And 'We're going to shake up the consulate!'

Undoubtedly the police will attempt to disrupt future pickets but we are determined that we will remain to picket outside the consulate.

The pickets have received broad support from many individuals and groups including FRFI, EISC, Edinburgh University Latin America Solidarity Society, Faslane Peace Camp, Women For Peace, Stop the City and supporters of the John McLean Society and students who have been occupying their colleges. Loma Morgan and Rosie A

The media and the miners strike



The ruling class lie-machine is a highly developed mechanism which has always been used against the Irish people, black people, trade unionists and anyone else who opposes the rule of profit. During the miners' strike this machine has been brought out once again to lie, distort and censor on behalf of the wealthy minority whose rule is threatened by the courage and determination of striking miners and their communities. What follow are but a few examples of the lie-machine in action.

Every day the media vilify Arthur Scargill. Everything from his hair to his politics has become poison in the pens of ruling class propagandists. The most infamous single attack took place in May when the *Sun* tried to run a front page story under the headline 'Mine Führer' accompanied by a photograph taken in such a way as to make Scargill appear to be giving a Nazi salute. This filth was stopped by *Sun* printworkers who prevented its appearance. The photograph, however, appeared in many papers. The biggest lie of all has been the attempt to portray the strike as the result of Scargill's 'manipulation' of miners. Scargill answered this in August when he said:

'The miners' strike of 1984 did not spring fully grown from the head of one individual (as the capitalist press and indeed television news would have you believe). It was the response of thousands of men and women to a pit closure threat as savage as it was senseless.'

On 22 May the *Guardian*, *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Express*, *Sun* and *Standard* published a picture of NUM member Frank Branwell 'returning to work' at Markham Colliery. Frank Branwell did not return to work. He spent that day on the picket line. After pressure the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Sun* printed tiny 'corrections' the same week. The *Times* did not do so until August. The *Standard* simply refused to 'correct' its lie.

In November Fryston colliery scab miner Michael Fletcher became a media 'hero' for allegedly being beaten up by striking miners. His bed in a Pontefract hospital was surrounded by hacks. After being sent home for the weekend, he returned to the hospital to star in a stage-managed visit from MacGregor for the benefit of the media. In the same hospital Charles Maxwell lay injured and ignored by these hacks. Maxwell, a striking miner from the same pit, was beaten to the ground on 20 November by 5 police thugs. He spent 4 days in hospital with kidney, back and facial injuries.

A month earlier wheelchair-bound Brenda Stout was viciously attacked in her own home by three masked scabs; she was slapped, slashed with a knife, throttled with telephone cord and her home wrecked. The attack was described by the police as 'half-hearted'. It was largely ignored by the media. Brenda Stout is a member of the Bickershaw Wives Support Group.

When the home of a scab miner was destroyed by fire, the media waxed elo-

quent about 'arson'. The man concerned had burnt his home himself. When a scab miner appeared on television with his face scarred by acid, the cliché books were rifled for phrases of condemnation. This man was later found to have done it himself for publicity. Publicity was willingly given by the bought-off media.

The emergence of working class women as an independent political force in the strike has frightened the life out of the ruling class. Consequently the women are belittled, patronised or ignored by the media. Stories about women in soup kitchens are just about acceptable. Working class women as political fighters, organisers, picketers and resisters of police violence—such stories are not acceptable. Thus the 10,000 strong women's march in Barnsley and 20,000 strong women's march in London were largely ignored. What would have been the media response if 10,000 women had marched *against* the strike?

The miners' strike has exposed more sharply than ever the myth of a 'free' press and 'independent' broadcasting. The media are owned by the ruling class to serve the interests of the ruling class. Three rich men—Robert Maxwell, Rupert Murdoch, Victor Matthews—own 75% of all daily and 83% of all Sunday papers sold. Tiny Rowland of Lonrho 'freely' bought the *Observer* to protect his profiteering and theft in Africa. Two companies—W H Smith and Menzies—control newspaper and magazine distribution to over 80% of newsagents. The media are as much part of the capitalist state as courts and cops. The media lie is as much a weapon against the working class and oppressed as the police truncheon.

It is equally true that media workers who disseminate anti-NUM propaganda are as much strike-breakers as scab miners who cross picket lines. Despite the whining that breaks out from time to time about 'media bias' media workers, with a few honourable exceptions, have continued to disseminate anti-strike material. Yet distributing a media lie is as treacherous as moving coal from a pithead. Media trade unionists who support the miners' strike should refuse to handle anti-strike material just as some transport workers have refused to handle coal. This would not only be real solidarity with the miners but also a real blow against the ruling class lie-machine deceitfully called the 'free' press.

Terry O'Halloran

Thanks to Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom for information supplied.

A little local

'I am not one of your local characters. I vote in Florida'. So spoke National Coal Board Chairman, Ian MacGregor, who went on to describe the miners' strike as 'a little local difficulty'. Indeed, MacGregor's interests and horizons stretch far beyond the British coalfields; his casual arrogance bears the hallmark of one of capitalism's men of the world: a doyen of high finance, whose trade binds the globe with a million lines of credit.

MacGregor was appointed Deputy Chairman of British Leyland in 1977 by the Labour Secretary of State for Industry, Eric Varley, who made the South African Michael Edwardes Chairman at the same time. In 1980 Keith Joseph persuaded MacGregor to take on the chair of the British Steel Corporation (BSC). The New York based merchant bank Lazard Freres, of which MacGregor is a partner and thus part owner, were paid £675,000 plus a 'performance related' bonus of up to £1,150,000 for his services. By 1981 Thatcher had grown pleased with her acquisition, describing MacGregor as 'the best politician in Britain' and offering Lazards a further \$1.8m bonus if he could get the steel industry to 'break even' in two years. The BSC employed 166,000 workers in 1980; by the end of 1983 there were 80,000. MacGregor contemptuously dismissed steel union leader Bill Sirs, '... In forty five years on the labour front it was the most poorly judged position I've seen.'

Before being invited to join Lazards in 1978 MacGregor had distinguished himself as chairman of the US transnational corporation Amax. He had led the company since the 1960s and was Honorary Chairman up to 1982. Formerly American Metal Climax, Amax is the third largest US coal company, it trades minerals and petroleum out of fourteen countries with a concentration of investments in southern Africa. In 1975 MacGregor had a personal investment of \$2m in Amax and Standard Oil of California (now Chevron) bought up twenty per cent of the company. It began investing heavily in oil in the Gulf of Mexico, the North Sea and Western Australia. However, it is the southern African investments that flourished best under MacGregor.

Amax bought up twenty nine per cent of the Tsumeb copper mining complex in Namibia, which was accused by the International Commission of Jurists of running a contract labour system 'akin to slavery'. In Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, Amax collaborated with the Anglo-American Corporation to exploit its copper deposits. Accumulated profits were used to invest in South Africa itself, where mining wages were held down to about a sixth of the average US miner's wage. Amax's South African investments are intertwined with British and South African capital. For his contributions towards the systematic looting of the oppressed southern African people MacGregor was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Science at the University of Angola in 1970, by the fascist Portuguese colonial rulers, and in 1978 he won the Rand Gold Medal of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum Engineers for his contribution to South African mining.

The methods used to extract profit from African labour were then turned by MacGregor upon the US miners. In 1974 Amax refused to sign a contract with the United Mineworkers of America which would ensure union members limited benefits concerning pensions, medical assistance for disabled miners, and a say in the safety conditions in the mines. Miners at the Belle Ayre colliery in Wyoming struck in January 1975, other collieries worked to rule in sympathy. Chevron moved in with its bid. The union complained to the Federal Trade Commission that this was a move to finance union busting activities. Amax threatened strikers with dismissal and posted advice to union members on how they could resign from the union and strike-break without penalty. Mac-

The ruling class press scream in horror at meetings between representatives of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the governments of the socialist countries and Libya. Yet they are mute on the links between Thatcher, MacGregor and transnational corporations and banks which they serve. The alliance of banking capital, giant industrial combines and the state stand at the heart of imperialism. In the oil industry we can see condensed the trends of world trade and capitalism. Today, the banks and transnationals are collaborating to tighten their hold on the world's energy supplies and distribution. Their use of the British state against the NUM and for the control and destruction of the British coal industry are part of this strategy. By fighting for their jobs British miners have joined the frontline of those resisting the global plans of imperialism.

Gregor harnessed the law and ancillary gangs to crush the miners as they had been dealt with in southern Africa. He wheeled in the popular Country and Western singer Loretta Lynn to sing out the praises of Amax. By March 1975 production at the Belle Ayre pit had recommenced, and although miners picketed it for a further two years the strike was lost.

According to the *Financial Times* it was Frank Chapple, former electricians' and power workers' union leader, who suggested that MacGregor should be appointed to head the NCB, because 'it was essential to find someone who was not going to be frightened of Arthur Scargill'. Thatcher needed little encouragement. With MacGregor's appointment in September 1983 the merchant banker was promised £1,150,000 if he achieved on the British coalfields what he had in the rusting steel mills, the non-unionised mines of the USA, and the oppressed nations of southern Africa and South Africa itself.

Scouting for capital

'A monopoly, once it is formed and controls thousands of millions, inevitably penetrates into every sphere of public life, regardless of the form of government and all other "details"'. V Lenin, *Imperialism The Highest Stage of Capitalism*

Only the most cunning and ruthless capitalists are invited into the ranks of the merchant bankers. Among their functions are to serve as scouts for large scale capital: reconnoitering markets, company accounts and share prices, analysing them and selecting targets for purchase. When the target company is located the merchant bank will arrange lines of credit, for a fee, for the giants of the capitalist world to make their bids with. By these means the weaker capitalists are devoured by the stronger, and capital is directed towards its most profitable grounds. Merchant bankers are in the vanguard of capital, and they themselves are in a position to take large holdings in the companies they form. Lazard's directors sit on the boards of over sixty US corporations. It gained the reputation of being 'the merger bank'; arranging the RCA takeover of Random House and Hertz, the McDonnell Corporation takeover of Douglas Aircraft

Company (the conglomerate manufactures jet-fighters for the US and Israeli forces), Fiat's merger with Citroen, and many more. The most infamous of Lazard's creations is the US electronic giant ITT, which was proven to have helped destabilise the Popular Unity government in Chile, and which President Allende accused of 'attempting to bring about civil war' in his land. CIA agents sat on the board of ITT, and a year after the bloody military coup in Chile the Director of the CIA, at the time, John McCone, was given a directorship of ITT.

Lazards was founded upon the merchandise of the slave trade in 1847, selling drapery out of New Orleans. In 1848 it moved to San Francisco, dealing gold out of New York and establishing banking houses in Paris and London. The gold led Lazards into the heart of the British banking system and the ruling class. It provided the basis for credits which helped establish colonial rule across Africa and Asia. Lazards invested in Anglo-Dutch oil interests. The British section of Lazards is interwoven through share-ownership with the US company. Lazard Brothers in Britain is largely owned by the Pearson group, which is a major shareholder of Shell and maintains oil investments in Texas. Lazard's directors include a former chairman of the Conservative Party, the



POPPERFOTO

difficulty' Imperialism versus the miners

director of the former Reserve Bank of Rhodesia, the Chairman of the Commonwealth Development Corporation, the President of the Anglo-Taiwan Trade Committee etc. Lazards founded the first merchant bank in South Africa along with the Anglo-American Corporation; Union Acceptances in 1955. Lazards led the way in raising loans for the South African government from the London money market in 1970, after this source had been denied the apartheid regime since 1959. Merchant bankers like MacGregor are in the vanguard of imperialism: from boardrooms and jets they plan its strategy, direct the tactics, and wield capital against labour across frontiers.

Karl Marx described how each capitalist crisis accelerates the concentration of ownership of productive resources into fewer and fewer hands, and speeded up the exploitation of the workforce in order to keep up the rate of return on investment. Crises are boom-times for the merchant bankers: it is then that they scale the commanding heights of capital. Crusader for free-enterprise and competition Ronald Reagan has loosened US anti-trust laws to facilitate the concentration process. In Britain last year Lazard Brothers multiplied the value of its merger business five fold upon the 1982 figure. The Pearson group itself includes Lazards, the *Financial Times*, half *The Economist* and *Investors' Chronicle*, Penguin and Viking Books, Madame Tussauds and Royal Doulton. Significantly, such mergers when directed by the most astute merchant banker can bring tasty pickings: Texaco and Shell for instance are reckoned by *The Economist* to be paying \$4 a barrel for oil through purchases of other producers and distributors, about a seventh of its market price!

In 1983 the total value of US company mergers was \$73.1bn, more than a third again greater than in 1972. The imperialist oil industry saw \$15bn worth of mergers in 1983, a half again greater than in 1982. This year the merger market is breaking all records. In the first quarter of 1984 the value of US takeovers was put at over \$20bn, twice any previous quarterly record. Significantly, Texaco

has bought Getty Oil for \$10.2bn, Mobil absorbed Superior Oil for \$5.7bn, and Chevron took Gulf for \$13.4bn. The rate of concentration in the energy industry has been phenomenal: Conaco, Dupont, Elf Equitaire, Marathon and Phillips Oil are just some of the other corporations that have been gobbling or gobbled up in the recent period: directed by the bankers and strengthening a monopoly hold over energy sources and markets for a handful of multi-millionaires.

The manipulations of high finance

'There have been more and more banks entering the energy lending field in the past five years... The industry is borrowing more and more money all the time.' James Adamson, Vice President of Chase Manhattan Bank.

Capitalists are concerned with profits not what their assets look like. The activities of the banks allow them to obtain an increasing share of the profits produced world-wide even though they, themselves, produce no wealth at all. Money which makes money - capital in its most parasitic form. RCG Manifesto: The Revolutionary Road to Communism in Britain

Each merger among the transnationals carries a load of new debt. The merchant bank is a busy go-between for the energy transnationals and the banks. Lazard's and MacGregor's New York address is 1, Rockefeller Plaza, top suite above the Rockefeller Centre which directs the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Standard Oil Energy concerns. A quarter of the directors of the Bank of England stem from merchant banks or the oil transnationals. Imperialist banks have put up to 90 per cent of the purchase price for recent oil mergers. They stand to earn vast interest payments and to wield control over a vital commodity. In March alone, the start of the NUM strike the US magazine *Business Week* noted that the imperialist banks had put aside \$34bn as standby loans for merger purposes; that is triple the total requirement for 1983. Atlantic Richfield (Arco) raised \$12bn to bid for Gulf, but Chevron outbid them raising \$14bn. Nonetheless, Arco will still have to pay \$7m in fees to the bank syndicate, led by Chase Manhattan, for the credit line set up to allow Arco to bid. Merchant banks were paid \$63m for their joint efforts in raising funds for the various bidders for Gulf.

The huge demand for credit required by the energy transnationals to carry out mergers has contributed to rises in interest rates. Chief victims of this are the oppressed nations, soaked in unpayable debts of over \$810bn to the imperialist banks. Each half-per-cent rise in interest rates takes an additional \$3.5bn out of the world's poorest nations. Four successive interest rate rises on the US money markets this spring, coinciding with giant mergers, added \$13bn to the oppressed nations' debts! Out of Latin America alone they added an extra \$3.5bn to debt repayments, only just under \$1bn less than the continent spends on food imports for its people, a third of whom rot in hunger. Each year the parasitic transnationals whom Mac-

Gregor serves plunder between \$150bn and \$200bn from the oppressed nations. This, combined with the debt burden which will take, for example, a third of Latin America's export earnings in repayments this year, prevents the oppressed nations from developing their own energy resources, forces them into increasing dependence upon the likes of Amax, the British banks and the energy transnationals.

Through the process of concentration oil companies now form twelve of the world's twenty biggest transnationals. Between them they control over seventy five per cent of capitalism's trade in petroleum. This degree of monopolisation allows them to manipulate market prices for maximum profitability. Between 1973 and 1982 oil prices increased ten fold, about three times the average for world commodity prices, and more than tripled the oppressed nations' expenditure on oil imports, absorbing over a quarter of their export earnings.

In 1982 any sugar exporting country had to produce and sell nine times as much in order to buy a ton of oil as in 1960. The imperialist banks conspire with the energy transnationals to keep oil prices high: they fear that a steep decline in oil prices will mean that their big clients like Mexico, Indonesia and Nigeria, oil producers, will be unable to repay their loans and interest. Not surprisingly, just seven of the oil transnationals made combined profits of over \$24bn in 1980.

The imperialist banks, the transnationals and the imperialist states are directly responsible for mass hunger in the world. In keeping with their trade of preying upon the weak, Lazard Freres have developed a new enterprise; as financial adviser to the tyrannies of Turkey, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Panama and Zaire among others. Helping to arrange the conditions of the masses so that they become 'economically viable' through the bloody repression of state forces, so that the imperialist banks will profit from the mountains of debt heaped upon the oppressed. Wherever these jet-borne parasites like MacGregor descend they and their local henchmen meet resistance on the streets!

Imperialist plans for coal

'The intensity of competition between fuels will make it important for companies to consider setting a foot in more than one camp... In the future, increasing attention may be paid to their access to diverse types of energy.' First National City Bank, Energy Memo 1967.

With the imperialist crisis deepening in the 1970s and 80s the growth in demand for energy has slowed. World oil consumption fell nearly 8 per cent over 1979-80. This slowing has put pressure on oil prices to fall and accelerated the merger

process to counter its effects at the same time. The transnationals have sought to dominate the potential rival coal industry, and have led opposition to the Soviet gas pipeline link with western Europe. With its sights set on the imminent British miners' strike, Shell lobbied in London and Washington for increased British coal imports. The mammoth banking and transnational investments in oil require energy market domination if profits are to be realised and the banks repaid.

Proven imperialist oil reserves are estimated at forty years supply while coal reserves would last two hundred years. Even though, on average, coal is 55 to 65 per cent cheaper than fuel oil for industrial uses coal production in the US, Canada and Australia, containing three quarters of imperialism's coal deposits, is being run at 20 per cent below capacity. With their huge profits, companies such as Exxon, BP, Shell and Chevron have bought up mines and begun diversification into nuclear and other forms of energy. Over 60 per cent of US coal reserves are owned by the oil transnationals. With the criminal logic of the market place 3,000 US mines, half the total, have been shut down in the last six years. US mines are deserted as soon as they are dug! The Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Kentucky coalfields are running at 40 per cent of their capacity. Amax and MacGregor paved the way for mass unemployment on the US coalfields, for families to sell up their possessions, travel and sleep in their cars in the desperate search for work. This is what MacGregor means when he preached from a City of London pulpit: 'Miners are an international breed. The important thing about mining communities is their mobility.' As a merchant banker MacGregor directs capital towards its most fertile feeding grounds. Exceptionally, South Africa is increasing its coal production and trade: jetties are under construction and by 1987 South Africa, with the assistance of Amax and Anglo-American, intends to increase its coal exports from 30 million to 44 million tonnes, a quarter of world trade in coal.

MacGregor will be satisfied only when conditions on the British coalfields approach those in southern Africa, then, with a huge reserve army of unemployed labour and broken unions, 'privatisation' could begin. The transnationals would move in, their hired hand having paved the way.

Miners, oppressed and revolutionary peoples unite

'The Vietnamese Miners' Trade Union has been closely following and wholeheartedly supporting the heroic struggle waged by the British miners to defend their right to work, their social welfare achievements, and the freedom of trade unionism'. Press release, Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, London.

PRICE WATERHOUSE

This firm of City accountants which the government is paying to try and seize NUM funds plays a critical role in the oil giants' fortunes: it handles their accounts. Shell, Gulf, Chevron and Exxon are among the corporations that have good reason to be grateful to Price Waterhouse for they are experts in tax avoidance for the rich and powerful: on \$5.186 billion income Chevron paid just 2.7 per cent in taxes. And how will the government pay Price Waterhouse? Out of NUM funds.

'The Thatcher government is merely an executive committee, one of many, of the giant corporations who now control the resources of the so-called free world and isn't that phrase an insult to the intelligence of the people in that so-called free world! In our own situation we are opposed not just to the government, we are opposed to those big international monopolies such as BP, Esso, Arco, all these giant companies which in fact now have a long term strategy to buy up the coal, oil and gas reserves of the world so that they can play their game with the price of energy which everyone needs. And that is the long term strategy behind this strike. The present government is being urged forward by their masters in the boardrooms of international capitalism to break the back of the miners' union, and also the organisations of the entire working class...'

Malcolm-Pitt, President Kent NUM at the Irish Solidarity Movement Conference, October 14, 1984.



JOHN STURROCK/NETWORK

The British miners have faced the same concentration of ownership and distribution, the same manipulation of markets that confronts the oppressed masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America. They have experienced something of the techniques of violent repression and cynical manipulation of the law that is meted out to the oppressed, be they in South Africa, Chile or Ireland. Thatcher and MacGregor personify the vulgar brutality of imperialism: that alliance of banking capital, transnationals and the state. Its strength has been drawn from generations of poor and oppressed people across the globe. British oil consumption between August and October rose 40.6 per cent on last year's figures for the same months: additional imports of half a million barrels a day. Phillips and Drew, London stockbrokers, estimate that Britain is paying £250-300 million a month in extra oil costs to provide fuel for power plants to keep running and exhaust the miners' determination. The money to pay for this is wrung from the poor and oppressed of Britain by the British state and is choked out of the masses of the world by the banks and transnationals.

Labour aristocrats like Varley, Sirs, Chapple and Kinnock are inheritors of a long line of treachery bought by imperialist super-profits. They recognise the threat posed to them and their privileges of unity between British workers in struggle, the world's oppressed masses and the socialist and anti-imperialist countries. They will do all in their power to prevent the emergence of such unity, but that unity is the only way forward, the only way to weaken the imperialist ruling class.

At a recent meeting of the Wall Street Stock Exchange, a training ground for MacGregor 'skills', CIA Director William Casey described the oppressed nations as the 'principal battleground' for imperialism and the transnationals as 'the most effective means' of achieving victory. Thatcher, MacGregor and the British state have brought the battleground into the heartland of imperialism. The British miners' struggle is saluted by oppressed and revolutionary peoples across the globe.

Victory to the miners
Trevor Rayne



CLASS POLITICS OR CLASS POWER?

'Class Politics' – an answer to its critics, by Ben Fine, Laurence Harris, Marjorie Mayo, Angela Weir and Elizabeth Wilson. Distributed by Central Books. 64 pages. £1.50.

'We are conscious' write the authors of this pamphlet, 'of the inadequate treatment of racism and N. Ireland, both of which we regard as fundamental issues for the British Left.' The entire pamphlet is then devoted to getting down to the 'nitty gritty' of what the next labour government should do. No wonder racism and Ireland, the two key issues of the British revolution are to be omitted!

'Class Politics' is one of the latest salvoes in the increasingly bitter factional war in the Communist Party of Great Britain (CP). Its authors form part of the coalition of oppositional forces to the current 'Euro-communist' leadership of the party

Their publication is a plea for the Communist Party to return to the good old staple diet of British politics: getting a Labour government elected, more state intervention in the economy and opposition to the EEC. Their polemic is focused mainly on the forces in the CP and its orbit which they name the 'newer left'. This trend is personified, we are informed, by old timers Professor Eric Hobsbawm and Editor of the misnamed *Marxism Today*, Martin Jacques. While the authors of 'Class Politics' want a Labour government the 'newer left' have plumped for an anti-Thatcher alliance stretching from the CP to the Tory 'wets'. So serious is this struggle over which set of opportunists to support that the *Morning Star* actually serialised whole sections of the pamphlet, billing it as 'new and controversial'.

In the 64 pages of their publication, the authors never characterise the main instrument of class rule in Britain, the state. The British imperialist state is in fact presented as neutral throughout. The next Labour government, we are told, will introduce 'substantial measures of state economic intervention' aimed at 'overcoming the interests of financial and industrial

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capital'. The very idea that the capitalist state, so carefully created over three centuries, will meekly commit suicide at the behest of Neil Kinnock's Labour Party is a quite grotesque proposition.

Just before the successful Russian Revolution in 1917 Lenin wrote:

'The struggle to free the working people from the influence of the bourgeoisie in general, and of the imperialist bourgeoisie in particular is impossible without a struggle against opportunist prejudices concerning the "state".'

Lenin and the Russian revolutionaries understood that the working class needed its own state organisations. Lenin posed the question that authors of 'Class Politics' chose to dodge:

'Is it conceivable that such an organisation can be created without first abolishing, destroying the state machine created by the bourgeoisie for themselves?'

This question has in fact been answered in every revolution since 1917 – and the answer is a very emphatic – no. The workers and oppressed have to create their own type of state that suits majority, not minority rule.

In Britain, the working class and the oppressed face a vicious and powerful capitalist state, that will stop at nothing to protect the rule of capital. All opponents of the ruling class are subjected to its full force, whether black youth in the 1981 uprisings, supporters of the Irish liberation struggle or miners on the picket lines. The bureaucratic and repressive machine that is today trampling over basic democratic rights in the interests of profit, can never serve the interests of the working class.

The authors of 'Class Politics' may find it distasteful, but the essence of the Marxist-Leninist position on class, is the winning of power for the working class itself. As Lenin observed 'Which class holds power decides everything': in other words not just class politics, but working class power!

John Strawson



WAR AGAINST THE PEOPLE

Denis, a striking Yorkshire miner, and Chas, a communist activist, review 'State of Siege', a new and comprehensive analysis of the police role in the miners' strike.

This book is an extensive inquiry into the present miners' strike. It deals in graphic detail with the role that the state has played in mobilising every part of its apparatus to defeat the NUM. It is made up of three volumes written as the strike has developed – the titles of each section reflect the development of the attack on the NUM and most importantly the response of the miners and the women in the coalfields. From a *State of Siege*, to the *Iron Fist*, to *Agitate! Educate! Organise!*

NATIONAL POLICE FORCE

This book is prefaced by the state's intention to render picketing ineffective by the use of the law. As is well known, at the start of the strike, Nottinghamshire was under siege from the police – miners, and especially Yorkshire miners, were never allowed into the county. But before all this happened the state had been preparing. At a result of the defeat of local police at Salfrey Gate in 1972, the National Reporting Centre was set up as a means of co-ordinating police operations on a national scale. The book exposes the intentions of the Association of Chief Police Officers and brings credence to the claims of there being a national police force that can be mobilised by just a phone call.

IRELAND

It draws with great clarity comparisons with the policing in the Six Counties of Ireland. The book compares the scabs in Notts and the protection of their 'right to work' with the loyalists in the Six Counties and their so-called right to a separate sectarian state. What is more, right from the very start, the authors point to the fact that 'new allies' for the miners will be found amongst those who have already witnessed the gathering of state power – the Irish people, black people and the unemployed. For these people have been branded as criminals just as the miners have been. The repression that the state dishes out points to these political conclusions. During this strike, just as in Ireland, the police and the state have been developing a whole series of new laws and practices for future use – for example, the new Police Act, the riot training, the use of the prisons, the courts, intimidation of whole communities. It is significant also that police experience gained against the black youth who rose up in anger against the police in 1981, has been applied against the miners.

WAR

The authors make it clear the police assaults are part of a total war against the

people of the pit villages. An older miner describes the police riots in Fitzwilliam and Hemsworth as 'a calculated attack on the community'.

While the pro-scab media diverts attention, the courts and prisons are mobilised to isolate activists from fellow strikers. On the evidence of police lies, miners are fined, 'bound over' and imprisoned. In Yorkshire's Armley jail alone, 150 miners are on remand. The war, however, is being fought on two sides and increasingly people are saying that the strike cannot finish while people are in jail. As one miner says,

'I don't think that it would be right to go back until our prisoners are released. What ever the charges are, the men have been forced into the situation. We shouldn't go back without people coming out of prison.'

WOMEN

The book also records the active and decisive role women are playing in the strike. One is quoted as saying,

'The women are behind the men and are backing them – they're 100%... The women are there now, its opened our eyes. They're not going to sit back and wash pots – they're going to get out and fight.'

Another comments that she will never go back to just working in the home,

'I want to carry on working in a woman's group. I'd like to do some work on apartheid or CND.'

There are also tributes to support received from women up and down the country, especially from Greenham Common. The strike has meant,

'Women have established themselves as a powerful political force for the present and the future, a force which is fired with the enthusiasm born out of injustice and which, now created, will never be defeated.'

State of Siege is a book which fires a warning shot over the bows of the working class movement. Through its eye-witness accounts of what has happened during the strike it highlights the readiness of the state to attempt to quell any form of working class resistance to repression by the state. It has some sinister and very serious connotations of things to come. Organise was a practice ground for 'future urban disturbances'.

State of Siege – Miners' Strike 1984. Politics and Policing in the Coal Fields. By Jim Coulter, Susan Miller and Martin Walker. Canary Press, 241pp, £3.50.

don't normally go for that type of music, I promise this is a treat! Get this anyway! Arthur Scargill's message, the message of the miners, of everyone in struggle – THE real enemy within – must be spread NOW!

By the way, all proceeds from this record go to the Miners' Solidarity Fund ... what more reason do you need! Shareen

THE WOMEN'S WAR

Only the rivers run free: Northern Ireland: The women's war, by Eileen Fairweather, Roisin McDonagh and Melanie McFadycon. Published by Pluto Press £5.95

'There are no answers, no conclusions in this moving book' – back cover. 'It is high time the British did the only just thing they will ever have done in Ireland: get out', Melanie McFadycon's introduction. A conflict between author and publisher compounded by the book's library categorisation – Current Events/Sociology. It is this failure to recognise that the women's war is a political matter which is at the heart of this book. The women themselves insist on this:

'No longer was the woman just a piece of property: your man's missus, your children's mother. As we've come more and more to the foreground we've discovered our own strength, and power'.

But the authors, who claim to 'provide facts and analysis' do nothing to deserve the trust of the hundreds of women who invite them into their homes and confidences.

Often, the women's stories, like Margaret Devine's inspiring contribution about the murder of her brother, hunger striker Micky, stand without 'analysis', but many horrific accounts of life under the army of occupation become merely depressing for lack of any contextual identifications with the nationalist cause.

One reason for this seems to be the author's perception of the revolutionary as a man, who is also responsible for male violence against women, which is upheld by the oppressive catholic church, forcing women like Nora to submit to years of humiliation and agony:

'I've been pregnant 20 times in all, maybe 22, maybe 25. I can't be sure ... it's 20 at the very least'.

Ironically, Nora's story is reflected in the bigotry which drives Eileen Paisley to trot out this litany of loyalism:

'I feel sorry for them because they're not allowed to think for themselves, they do what the church tells them

... they probably have big families so they can overcrowd the country.'

The protestant women in the book appear largely as lonely, bitter people, without the sense of class and community which unifies and strengthens the women of the nationalist ghettos. And yet they share little of the privileges accorded to their men, the last remnants of the ascendancy. Revealingly, the following is from Louise Spence, wife of loyalist torturer-leader Gusty, whose perception is that she, as a working class woman, is oppressed by the same forces as are her nationalist sisters:

'...throw them all out and let the working class what's on the street run the country, Catholics and Protestants. In fact, women could run things better, just lift women off the Falls and the Shankhill and let them take over, they know what it's like to have it hard ... those big fellas in their fancy cars, what do they know?'

Beth Summers

WHO LIES INSIDE

'Who lies inside', by Timothy Ireland, Gay Men's Press, Winner of 'The other' award, 1984

Our hero Martin is in his final year at school. He isn't particularly bright and he plays a lot of rugby. He goes drinking with the lads but he doesn't talk much. He is vaguely offended by their sexist, macho posturings but he uncomfortably has a stab at it himself. After all if he doesn't fit in with them he feels he doesn't fit in anywhere. His father demands the stock masculine response from his son and can't understand why Martin hasn't put up the pin-up calendar he gave him for Christmas. Martin can't understand either. He just doesn't want to put it up. His mother doesn't call her son 'sensitive', the closest she can get is 'imaginative'. Father and mother are unable to communicate with each other in any real way. He cannot express love to her because he is too busy playing the dominant male role and because Martin is a boy this is the role that he must conform to.

Male and female are oppressed and all

this is nicely observed. Martin refuses to respond to his feelings, the stranger inside. He realises that to carry on as he is doing now, to continue his shallow relationship with his girlfriend Margaret would be to turn out pale and grey like his mother or oafish and bullying like his father.

We learn the valuable lesson that in estranging yourself from your own feelings you inevitably become a stranger to the people around you. For someone who is struggling with their own feelings like Martin this book will be a revelation. But the writing is not that good and it comes over as a bit of a cliché. 'Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets boy instead.'

While Timothy Ireland presents a sensitive picture of gay oppression he fails to question why heterosexual relationships are so fragile in our society. Men and women are oppressed in this society because they are treated as units and are exploited. For me as a gay man this is the fundamental weakness of the book. Martin, it seems, by the end of the book is only offended by sexism and intolerance of 'people who are different'. If this was to lead to a wider understanding of the nature of sexism and intolerance then this would be a very good book, but it does not seem to point that way. I look forward to more books by this young writer which develop the wider aspects of coming to terms with a society which discriminates not only against gays but against a wide section of people who have nothing to gain by the system to live under.

Richard Roques

ENEMY WITHIN

'Strike!' by the Enemy Within. Rough Trade Records, £1.35 at Collets London bookshop or £1.50 at ordinary commercial outlets.

Remember 'Malcolm X – No Sell Out!!' 'Strike!' belongs to that unique blend of hip hop and politics perfected in 'Malcolm X', a fact which, in my opinion, is enough to guarantee it a place on any self-respecting ghetto-blaster!

Marek Kohn have got together to produce this excellent record: extracts from Arthur Scargill's speeches dubbed over a hard funk base a la 'Rockit' by Herbie Han-

New Caledonia which has been a colony since 1853 has the third largest nickel deposits in the world. The population is comprised of 43% Kanaks, 37% French and the rest from the Pacific and former French colonies. Before coming to power the French socialists promised self-determination, but delayed the process, whilst encouraging French immigration to form a pro-imperialist veto.

The French settlers were at first jubilant about their 'landslide victory'. Their party Rassemblement pour la Caledonie dans la Republique (RPCR) won 71% of the votes and 34 out of 42 seats in the assembly. In spite of the RPCR 'landslide victory' the Kanak insurrection continued for over three weeks, with militants of the FLNKS permanently operating road blocks bringing the country to a standstill. Some settler homes were raided for arms, for as one Kanak stated, they were facing 'barbarians with guns'. These words have tragically been proved right. On 6 December Kanaks travelling home encountered a road block set up by French settlers who threw dynamite into the cars, and then shot dead the survivors. Nine people were massacred, one died later. Two of those murdered were the brothers of Jean-Marie Tjibaou the leader of FLNKS. Other shooting incidents left a settler and a Kanak dead and four riot police wounded. French terrorists attempted to bomb Jean-Marie Tjibaou's home, after Kanaks had burnt down the home of Dick Ukeiwe the new president and leader of the RPCR. FLNKS proclaimed a Provisional Government on 25 Novem-

ber and swore in Jean-Marie Tjibaou as president. New Caledonia was renamed

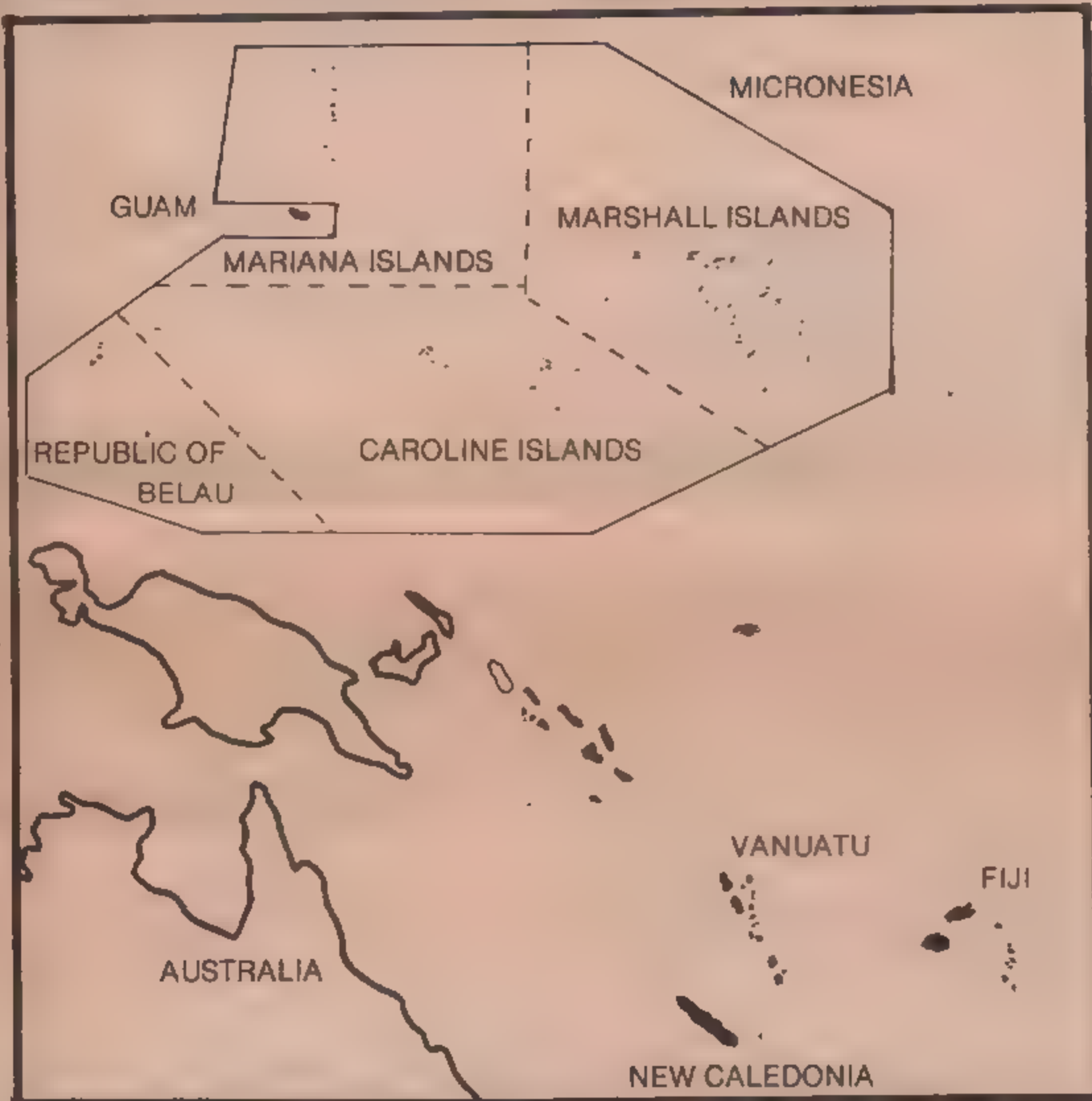
INSURRECTION IN NEW CALEDONIA



Top: Kanaks mourn their dead after the massacre.
Left: Kanaks operate a roadblock and demonstrate their opposition to French rule.

defending the rights of the oppressed. However FLNKS have stated that the Kanak people will not take part in a referendum which includes French settlers. For as Lenin put it, imperialism is always prepared to change the rules:

'You, exploiters and hypocrites, talk about democracy, while at every step you erect thousands of barriers to prevent the oppressed people from taking part in politics.'



Kanaky - meaning 'land of the people'. The aims of French imperialism and its lackeys were now in total disarray.

Mitterrand has sent a M. Pasani as a special envoy to draw up proposals for self-determination. He has been given two months to sort out French imperialism's problems. Squads of riot police have also been sent, bringing the total number to 1,400, which includes an elite 350-strong anti-terrorist unit.

French imperialism was caught napping by the insurrection in New Caledonia. The French hope quickly to regain ground by the usual imperialist methods of deceit, lies, and if necessary outright terror. Pasani on arriving in New Caledonia announced that he would not negotiate with the FLNKS until 'law and order' was restored. And he broadcast a message on TV and radio which did not mention independence. In Paris Prime Minister Fabius called for 'a political truce over the extraordinarily difficult and complex problem of New Caledonia'. In Parliament Fabius argued that any solution must respect the rights of both communities. M Jospin, a lead-

ing member of the French 'Socialist' Party, said that if a result in a referendum in New Caledonia was not clear then the French Parliament or the French people as a whole should decide the issue. So much for French socialism

Murder at Maralinga: British Nuclear Legacy

Death, cancer, forcible removals and unlamented irresponsibility are all part of the British nuclear legacy in Australia. In all 12 nuclear bomb tests took place. Other testing involved the atmospheric dispersal of plutonium and its effects. As a result of campaigning by Aborigines and Australian ex-servicemen, an Australian Royal Commission was set up in October of this year to examine the circumstances under which the British tests took place. The Commission which is coming to Britain in January promises to lift the mask of deceit off the Ministry of Defence as much as the Belgrano affair has done.

Since October the Commission has heard evidence detailing the gross criminality that took place in the 50s and 60s. Plutonium was burned in fires and scattered to measure the radiological effects of a nuclear accident. At Maralinga plutonium was buried in lead caskets and then covered with 10 centimetres of concrete. Also at Maralinga in 1967 an 'attempt to clean up' the plutonium lying on the ground was done by ploughing it 4 inches into the ground. Cobalt 60 pellets which were used in some of the devices were found scattered across the desert right up to 1964.

Initially the British government tried to ignore the Commission, but because of the endless exposure of British irresponsibility and secretiveness, Britain has now decided to be legally represented. Although 8,500 documents relating to the tests have been released by the Australian Defence Department, the Ministry of Defence holds many more; which under an agreement with the Australian government it refuses to release. It means that the British are again trying to cover up their murderous past.

The 12 bomb tests took place at 3 sites, Monte Bello Islands in Western Australia, and Emu Junction and Maralinga in South Australia between October 1952 and October 1957. Testing at Emu and Maralinga began a 30-year tragedy for the Aborigine people. Aborigines closest to the test areas were forcibly removed from their tribal lands and placed in mission camps at Yalata. Many have lived at Yalata for nearly 30 years, with the community suffering from unemployment, alcoholism, petrol sniffing, disease and government indifference to their plight. On 15 October 1953 Totem 1 was exploded at Emu Junction, an aborigine community living nearby saw the explosion and were caught by a radioactive black cloud which was blown across the desert. Yami Lester

who campaigns for the rights of aborigines in Emu Junction and Maralinga remembers its consequences:

'Everyone was vomiting and had diarrhoea, and people were laid out everywhere. Next day, people had very sore eyes, red with tears, and I could not open my eyes. I lost my sight in my right eye and could only see a bit in my left eye. I lost my left eyesight in 1957. Five days after the black cloud came, the old people started dying...'

Many Aborigines continued to live in the test areas. With typical racist arrogance the British and Australian authorities posted signs saying 'Keep Out', 'Danger' to stop nomadic Aborigines wandering into the region. Patrick Connolly who was with the RAF in Maralinga between 1959 and 1962 has stated:

'The problem of the Aborigines walking into restricted areas round Maralinga and Emu Plains was never ending. The signs were useless. During 2 1/2 years I was there I would have seen 400 or 500 of them in contaminated areas. Occasionally, we would bring them in for decontamination.'

'Other times we just shoed them off like rabbits. In some cases I know we just weren't interested because we didn't understand the seriousness of the situation.'

15,000 Australian and 500 British servicemen took part in the tests. Although a higher ratio than a normal population have died from cancer, have leukaemia, or have skin problems, only one person has successfully fought for and received compensation. Safety precautions were haphazard and in some cases non-existent. At Maralinga vehicles were left in the blast area to test radiological exposure. Warrant Officer William Jones was in charge of a Centurion Tank. After the blast WO Jones and his crew returned to the tank which would not start. The crew went to get spares, Jones stayed guarding the tank for 48 hours. 13 years later Jones aged 39 died of cancer. For most of the thirty years since, ex-servicemen have remained silent about the goings on in the Australian desert. Most were told to do so. The Ministry of Defence accepts no responsibility to either the aborigines or the ex-servicemen.

It is a tragic irony that Maralinga is an aboriginal word meaning 'field of thunder'.

This page was compiled by Dale Evans

United Nations trusteeship of the 2,000 islands of Micronesia in 1945. Recently the four Island nations which constitute Micronesia have been given limited autonomy, but the US still effectively controls their affairs. Between 1945 and 1963 more than 60 nuclear explosions took place, with more than six islands being blown off the face of the earth. In the Republic of Belau in the western islands of Micronesia the people twice rejected US nuclear plans for the region in two referenda in 1979, with 92% and 78% of the electorate voting for a constitution with an article declaring the Republic to be a non-nuclear zone. However, a Compact of Free Association has given the US military the following: 40 acres for a trident missile base, 2,000 acres on the largest island in Micronesia Babeldaob for storage facilities, another 30,000 acres on Babeldaob for a jungle warfare counter-insurgency training centre, the lengthening of two airport runways to 9,000 feet for military use.

The Marshall Islands in eastern Micronesia are of equal importance to the US military. On Kwajalein Atoll the US has removed its 8,000 residents and placed them on Ebeye island whose size is only 66 acres, smaller than New York's Central Park. The Marshallese on Ebeye live in shanty-towns without sewers or water facilities and depend on the US for food supplies. The Atoll is now used as a target for MX missiles with dummy warheads fired from the United States 4,200 miles away.

THE PACIFIC - US FRONTLINE BASES

The victory of the Vietnamese people against US imperialism, unrest in the Philippines, Taiwan and South Korea have elevated the strategic importance of the Pacific in US imperialism's war plans. Island nations of the Pacific have become front line bases in a massive US military build up threatening socialist nations and anti-imperialist struggles in the region. Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific and 'militaryspeak' expert Admiral Weisner said in 1980:

'The vital economic and political stakes of the US in the Asia-Pacific region entwine with the defence interests and commitments that are anchored essentially to a US forward basing strategy... The events of the past decade have brought this dynamic area of the world even more squarely into the foreground of policy concerns'.

US imperialism's role in the Pacific is supported by the British, French, Australian, Japanese, and New Zealand governments, all of whom have interests in the region.

French Polynesia is used for nuclear testing. Australia and New Zealand have economic interests all over the Pacific, and Pacific peoples provide cheap labour for both countries. Australia and New Zealand are part of a pro-imperialist pact with the US known as the Anzus alliance. The recently elected Labour government in New Zealand intends to renegotiate the terms of the alliance while the New Zealand Labour Party has called for withdrawing from

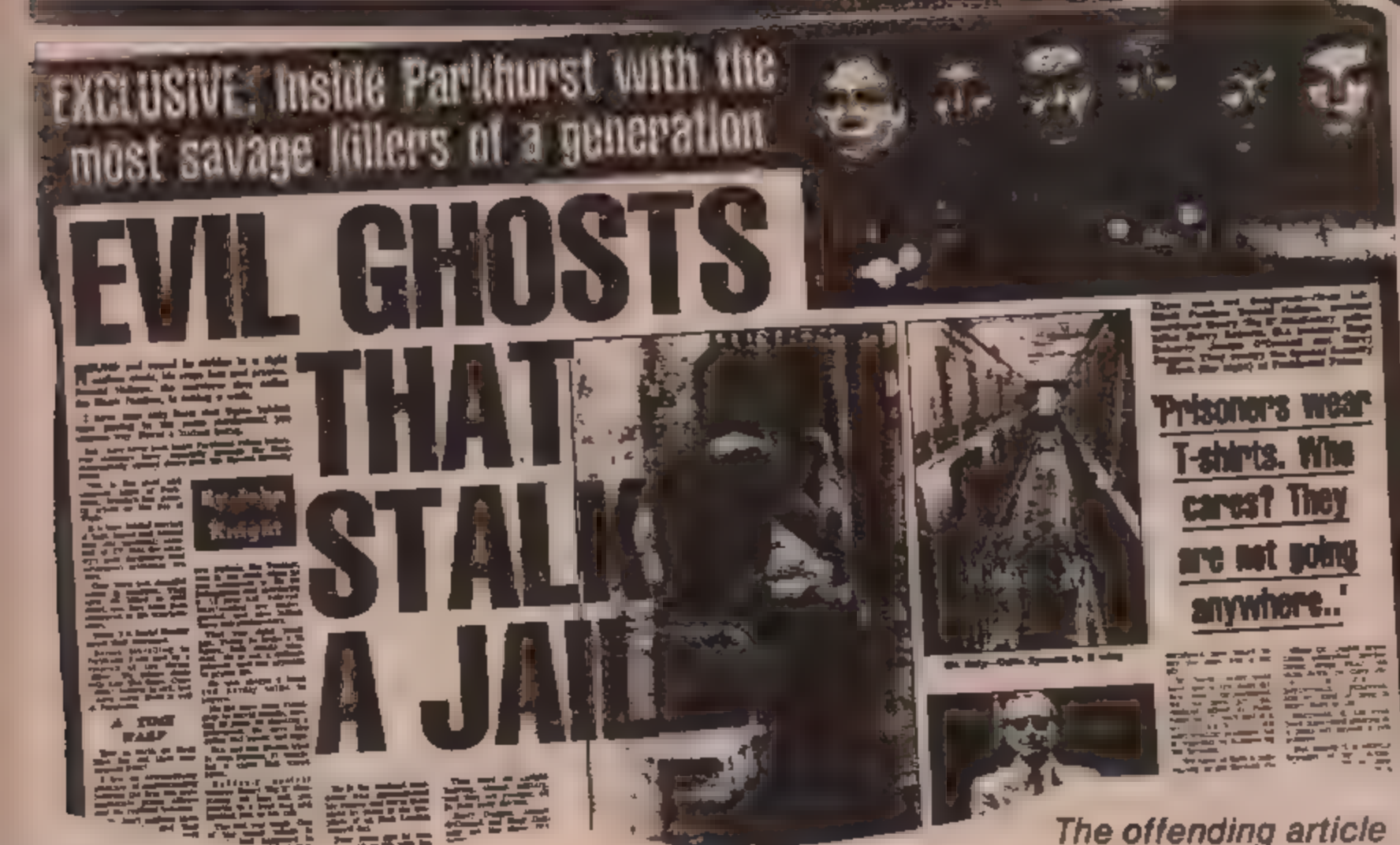
the Anzus alliance and the closing down of US bases in New Zealand.

Against imperialism's militarisation of the region, the Pacific peoples are fighting back demanding an end to nuclear testing and dumping, demilitarisation and independence from imperialism.

Micronesia - US arms depot

The United States took control under

Prisoners Fightback



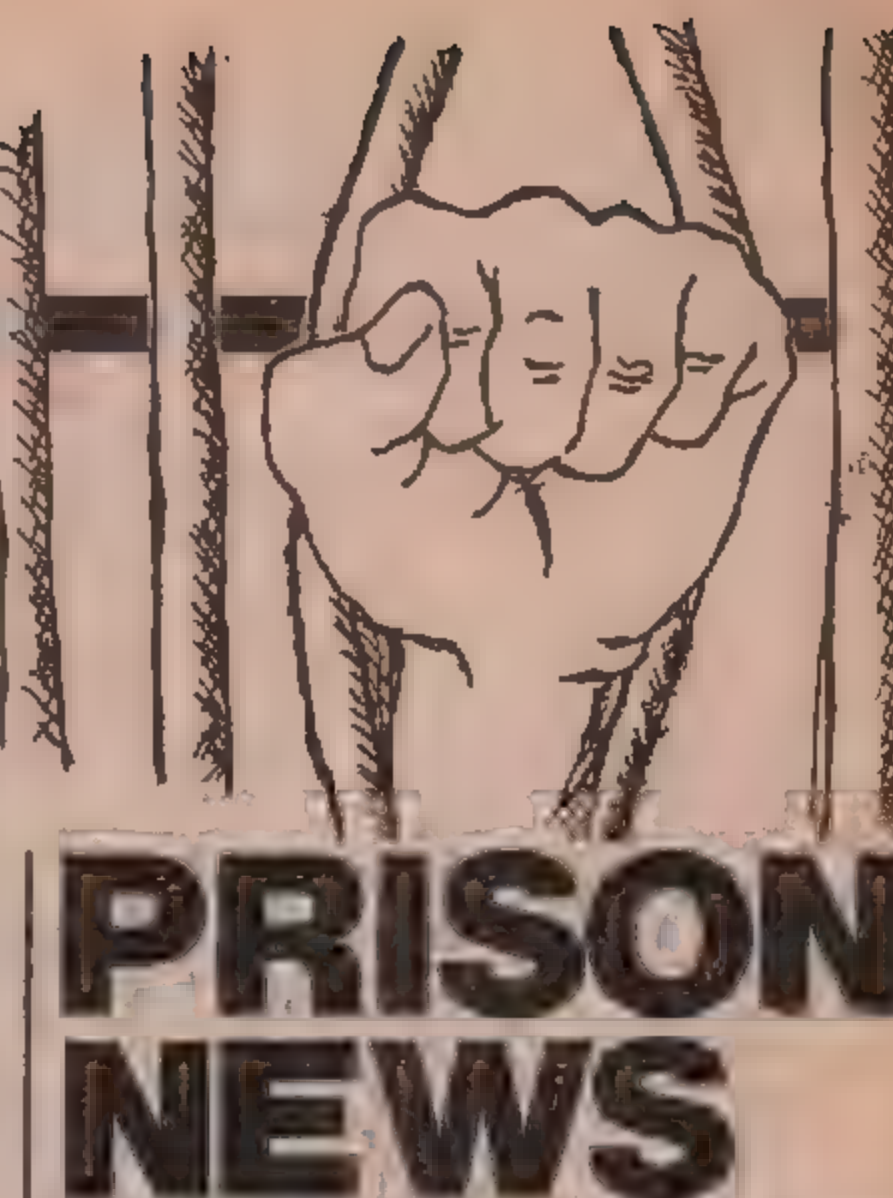
The offending article

Knight paints a glowing picture of medical treatment in Parkhurst and of Dr Cooper who for 17 years has been '...the principal medical officer at Parkhurst... a world authority on psychopathic prisoners... regarded as humane by the inmates...'. Prisoners in Parkhurst have a different view. As Jimmy McCaig said in evidence at the Parkhurst prison siege trial in May this year, Cooper is known to the prisoners as 'Doctor Death' and the large number of prisoners sectioned at Parkhurst are called 'Cooper's Troopers'. Knight does not mention that in May 1974 Irish POW Michael Gaughan, 'when on hunger strike in Parkhurst for political status and repatriation to Ireland, was

Security Block in Parkhurst, Joe O'Connell, Hugh Doherty and Harry Duggan. Describing them as 'three IRA terrorists' Knight contemptuously terms their demand for political status as 'fanaticism'. He writes, 'Twice a month they go to another part of the prison to see their visitors, if they have any' callously ignoring the fact that Irish POWs' relatives live in Ireland, that travelling is very expensive and visiting involves risk of arrest under the PTA and continual harassment for the visitors as well as the prisoners.

Knight's 'article' is yet another piece of gutter press distortion about British prisons and prisoners. Prison officers are 'firm but compassionate' and prisoners are 'ghastly ghosts'. Alan Rayfield the governor is depicted as relaxed and in control. So relaxed and in control, in fact, that in January 1983 two prisoners, John Bowden and Jimmy McCaig took the Assistant Governor, Schofield, hostage to draw public attention to the ever present threat of brutality they faced. It is significant that Schofield felt it necessary to accompany the two men to the prison hospital when the siege was over to make sure they weren't harmed by his fellow prison officers. So relaxed, that Rayfield banned prisoners from receiving FRFI in September. It will be interesting to see how many prisoners at Parkhurst get to read this article.

Alexa Byrne



The House of Lords has given official judicial sanction to Leon Brittan's repressive parole restrictions. The four prisoners who have fought a long and courageous legal battle against Brittan's policy lost their appeal to the House of Lords on 15 November. The four are considering an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights. Their fight is all the more urgent as Brittan's policy has claimed its first life. A prisoner committed suicide recently on learning that instead of getting parole as he had expected, he would have to serve another 12 years. This prisoner's blood is on the hands of Leon Brittan.

Four Scottish Labour MPs have demanded a public inquiry into Scotland's 'death camps' for young offenders. In a period of 18 months four prisoners died in Glenochil Detention Centre. Recently the Scottish death toll rose again when remand prisoner Arthur Padden died in a fire in Barlinnie prison. 'Suicides and self-inflicted wounds' are said to have doubled in Scottish prisons between 1980 and 1983. In London the 'House of the Dead', Brixton prison, claimed another of its victims when remand prisoner Michael Bird was found hanged.

More prisoners have been ghosted from Gartree under the notorious Circular Instruction 10/74. Irish POW Ronnie McCartney has been ghosted to Walton prison, Liverpool, whilst Irish POW Paul Norney has been ghosted to Lincoln prison. Four other prisoners were also ghosted but their names are not yet known nor what prisons they have gone to. All six will spend at least a month in solitary confinement. Meanwhile John Bowden (see FRFI 44) enters his fifth continuous month in solitary in Durham prison.

The Home Office has announced a special review of conditions in Holloway women's prison following the exposure of barbaric conditions in the 'medical' unit C Block. The Governor Joy Kinsley has been removed from Holloway and sent to practise her special 'talents' in repression against remand prisoners in Brixton. Kinsley was Governor at Holloway for less than three years. Her reign was opposed not only by the prisoners but also education workers, welfare workers and others. Holloway prison is notorious for its massive use of drugs, standing second in the 'league' table. Brixton is sixth in the same table so Kinsley is sure to feel at home.

The number of young people sent to prison rose by 21% between the second half of 1983 and the first half of 1984. The racism of the British judicial system is confirmed in recent figures for custody in South East England. In this area the ratio between white youth and black youth in the population is 30:1. The ratio in youth custody centres is 3:1. Between 1981 and 1983, 1,217 black youth passed through Rochester Youth Custody Centre compared to 3,659 white youth.

Department of Employment figures for earnings in the year to April 1984 reveal the crude levels of bribery used to entice racists and fascists to become prison officers. Prison officers earned an average of £257 per week making them the most highly paid manual workers in Britain. The average earnings for adult workers was £159.

Tony Sheridan

Gutter press slanders

'Savage', 'evil', 'dangerous', 'nasties', 'ghastly' — a few of the adjectives used by John Knight in a piece of British media propaganda filth spewed up in the *Sunday Mirror*, 18 November, to describe men incarcerated in Parkhurst prison, Isle of Wight. This 'exclusive', entitled 'Evil ghosts that stalk a jail', is full of lies and distortion portraying the prisoners as animals. The opening two paragraphs set the tone as Knight describes Donald Neilson in his cell, '... I have seen only lions and tigers behind bars pacing in the same methodical yet aimless way. Never a human being...'. He fails to mention that the cells are only 10 feet long and 8 feet wide and that prisoners are lucky if they get one hour's exercise a day. What would he do in such barbaric conditions?

force fed under medical supervision and in the process one of his lungs was pierced causing his death.

Knight claims that Dr Cooper 'sometimes prescribes psychotropic drugs' but gives no figures. Home Office figures show that 46,021 doses of psychotropic, hypnotic and drugs acting on the central nervous system were administered at Parkhurst in 1983: 172 doses per head — the second highest level of male prisons in the country.

Typical of the British media, Knight gives a distorted view of the Irish Republican prisoners held in the Special

John McCluskey interview

John McCluskey was arrested on 8 October 1974 and tried in January 1975. He was originally sentenced to 20 years but this was reduced to 10 years when it was discovered that the Judge, Melford Stevens, had got his charges wrong. As a result of his part in Albany and other protests, he lost every day of remission due to him.

Albany 1976

The riot in Albany on 16 September 1976 started off with an Irish prisoner called Brendan Dowd. He was in a physically bad condition. Two weeks after he was in Albany he was locked up in solitary confinement so we decided we should take some stand. We thought we should march into one wing and have a peaceful sitdown on one of the landings. We would demand to see the governor and let him know that we want our prisoner released from solitary.

In the end the deputy-governor [William Guinan, now governor of Wandsworth prison see FRFI 37, 42 and 44] came. He told us there would be no discussions, that we should just lead off. We refused because of his attitude and because we had decided to have a peaceful sitdown. I didn't understand really what a violent protest would be like. I came in off the exercise with a pair of sports shorts and a pair of sports shoes because it was warm.

The deputy-governor said 'OK lock the gate on them and leave them there till the morning.' We were quite happy at that. We'd come out in our time, under our own steam. So they locked the gate at the end of the landing and went off. A few screws stayed there observing us. About ten minutes after that we heard the charge coming up the stair. The deputy-governor was in front and about 20/30 of the riot squad: battle-dress; helmets; visors; sticks and the uniforms were all padded up with foam. They came at us from both sides. They battered us to the ground. I could remember passing out and I thought well at least they'll stop. Imagine a crowd of dogs attacking a rabbit. They only get really vicious when they get their victim down and that was when the real violence started. They just smashed us to

John McCluskey was released from Parkhurst prison on 10 October after serving ten years as an Irish prisoner of war in English prisons. FRFI comrades were privileged to be among the group which greeted him as he left the gates of Parkhurst. As readers know, John immediately threw himself into political activity speaking at the ISM conference 14 October and then at a week of meetings against strip-searching in Armagh (see FRFI 44). Before John returned to his home in Ireland he gave a long and detailed interview to FRFI. We are publishing this interview in three parts. The first part in this issue deals with the Albany prison protest 1976.



John McCluskey

pieces. The whole place — the walls in every room — was just spattered with blood. Sean Campbell received the worst treatment because he was the spokesman for the prisoners. They battered him with four screws to hold him and the deputy-governor standing beside them, encouraging the screws and telling them to charge into him. He had very broken ribs, fractured legs and arms and everything. They literally threw him down the stairs and jumped on top of him. He told me that he was lying at the bottom of the staircase and some of the screws seen his eyes open and said 'The bastard is still not knocked out' so they charged into him again and knocked him out.

We were carried to the seg unit. As they're carrying us down the stairs our

backs are trailing and banging down the staircase. So our backs were ripped open. They threw us into the seg unit. The screws in the seg unit charged in on top of us again. We went to hospital that night and Dr Cooper from Parkhurst prison came over to stitch us up. He never used any anaesthetic. (See 'Gutter press slanders' this page).

I spent five months in solitary. We refused to co-operate with a lot of the rules while we were in the seg unit. We refused to remove the bedding so the screws had to come in and take the bedclothes every day. No newspapers, no radio, totally isolated, very few letters. Our letters were going missing. That was part of the psychological torture. We were on a very restricted diet. I remember receiving food covered with dirt.

At that time the other prisoners were generally hostile to Irish political prisoners. But they told us afterwards that they were disgusted with the way things happened. A lot of them voiced their opinions to the governor. You can see how reluctant other prisoners would be to have a peaceful sitdown after the treatment that we had. But nevertheless some of the prisoners had a sitdown the following day in support of us.

To be continued.

URGENT

FRFI is trying to find out which prisons miners are being sent to. If there are any miners in your prison please let us know their names and prison numbers. As John McCluskey said, all imprisoned miners are political prisoners. They need all the support they can get.

FRFI FOR PRISONERS

FRFI is now being sent to nearly 90 prisoners, the majority of whom receive it free of charge. We want also to send FRFI to imprisoned miners. To do this we need money for our Prisoners' Fund. We urge all readers who support our work on prisons and the right of prisoners to receive political literature to send donations urgently. Cheques/POs should be made out to Larkin Publications and sent to: FRFI, Box 5909, London, WC1N 3XX.

Many prisoners have told us how much they enjoy reading FRFI. We urge all prisoners to pass on their copy to other prisoners when they've read it. This way the message of the prisoners' fightback can spread throughout the prison system.

continued from page 1

public. Apartheid agents produce fake pamphlets to smear the UDF as anti-white and to disorganise its events. Repression has not halted the upsurge of the people. Daily there are clashes with the police on the streets. The ANC has called for an intensification of the struggle:

'Let us disarm the whites and arm ourselves. Let us organise raiding parties to break into shops that sell weapons. Let us fight back.'

South Africa is preparing for a Black Christmas. Albertina Sisulu, Co-President of the UDF, says:

'The root cause of the suffering is the evil system of apartheid which our people have decided to challenge and destroy. In this context it becomes impossible for any South African of conscience to tolerate Christmas as a joyous occasion.'

The stayaway's success moved three business organisations to unprecedented public criticism of the regime's 'bad overreaction' and its detention of Piroshaw Camay, General Secretary of Cusa and Chris Dlamini, President of Fosatu. The employers are concerned that the state repression will remove any chance of negotiations with the trade unions.

Tougher military call-up laws have brought into the open another rift in the privileged white minority. At the same time as it is deploying thousands of troops on South Africa's streets the regime has to maintain a massive army of occupation in Namibia and on 31 October it extended the call up to all Namibian men aged 17 to 55. SWAPO's President Sam Nujoma has pledged complete defiance. Opposition to conscription has become an issue in South Africa too. White emigration has dramatically increased; it now runs higher than immigration. Families with teenage sons who refuse to die for apartheid are fleeing the country. The UDF's boycott campaign put a brake on Botha's plan to introduce conscription for Coloureds and Indians, and opposition amongst white students has reached the point that meetings now take place calling for South African troops out of Namibia.

With severe problems in maintaining a united power bloc at home, Botha relies even more on the support of Thatcher and Reagan to implement his strategy of murderous repression while seeming to promote reform. The revolutionary upsurge in South Africa and Namibia's war of liberation pose a fundamental threat to British and US imperialism and their massive investment in apartheid. These two powers alone voted against 146 nations of the world on the United Nations resolution condemning apartheid's recent killings and detentions. Britain's representatives described this motion as 'unreasonable'!

Thatcher helped Botha put the UDF's leaders on trial for high treason because leaders who reject any compromise with apartheid directly challenge the interests of British imperialism.

That is why the oppressed in Britain, and all people of conscience have a real interest in acting now for the release of the UDF detainees. In the US a campaign of direct action led by black people has put Reagan's policy of 'constructive engagement' in the dock. But in Britain the Anti-Apartheid Movement leadership's attacks on the RCG and City AA have paved the way for inertia at this crucial time. Thatcher's open collaboration has escaped with all but the mildest parliamentary rebuke. It is necessary that a nationwide campaign of protest involving tens of thousands starts immediately.

**FREE THE UDF TREASON TRIALISTS!
SMASH BRITISH
COLLABORATION WITH
APARTHEID**

Andy Goddard



Marita Anne

On Tuesday 11 December five men were convicted in the non-jury Dublin Special Criminal Court for their part in the Marita Anne gun-running. Three of the men – Martin Ferris, John Crawley and Michael Browne – were sent to prison for ten years. Two others – Gavin Mortimer and John McCarthy – were given suspended sentences of five years.

Martin Ferris and John Crawley told the court that the weapons were intended for use by the IRA against British imperialist occupation in the North. The non-jury court set up by the Free State ruling class to rubber stamp the jailing of Republicans had no hesitation in imprisoning Irish people for opposing British domination of Ireland.

As the prisoners left the court they raised clenched fist salutes and one shouted 'Up the Provos.' This defiance showed their unyielding determination to fight British imperialist terror in Ireland. FRFI sends greetings and solidarity to the imprisoned comrades.

Terry Marlowe

ISM NEWS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Two striking miners from Fitzwilliam colliery were given a standing ovation when they attended the Annual General Meeting of the Irish Solidarity Movement on 24 November. One gave a message of solidarity to the meeting – the highpoint of the day. The meeting, attended by 29 delegates and many observers, confirmed the position of the ISM adopted at the October 1983 Conference – to campaign on the demands Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now! Right of Repatriation for all Irish POWs! Conference affirmed that the policy of the ISM is to give unconditional support to the struggle of the Irish people for national liberation and therefore to the Republican Movement in its struggle to drive British imperialism out of Ireland. The conference also reaffirmed that the ISM is an open democratic body which allows freedom of expression (to speak, distribute and sell literature) to all organisations supporting its events.

The ISM Irish Solidarity Weekend and in particular the conference ' Belfast, Brixton, Orgreave – An Injury to One is an Injury to All' gave those active in the work a lead in the way forward – to take the issue of Ireland to those who had themselves been forced up against the British state, its police, courts and prisons. The conference therefore agreed to have a month of action in solidarity with the miners' struggle and also to produce a national campaigning leaflet which clearly outlined the position of the ISM and the issues we must be informing people about and campaigning on. The ISM pledged itself to continue its work in solidarity with Irish POWs in English gaols, in particular on repatriation and control units.

MANCHESTER MARTYRS DEMONSTRATION

Fitzwilliam miners joined the 100-strong Irish Solidarity Movement contingent with their banner on Sunday 25

November when 350 people marched to commemorate the Manchester Martyrs and in solidarity with Irish prisoners in English gaols. Despite the threat of attack by the 100 Loyalists who gathered in opposition, the rally and march went ahead. ISM and FRFI comrades ensured effective stewarding at the rally where a Fitzwilliam miner gave solidarity greetings. Other speakers included Linda Quigley, Kashmiri Workers Association and James Delaney (Sinn Fein). The Loyalists hounded the march to the end throwing verbal abuse at the marchers who refused to be provoked. In spite of this the police arrested four people all of whom were released before the march dispersed.

LONDON ISCS SAY VICTORY TO THE MINERS

Over 60 people including striking miners from Yorkshire, Durham and South Wales attended a meeting 'Victory to the Irish People! Victory to the Miners!' on 20 November called by North and South London ISCs. The ISM speaker, Maxine Williams, described how the skills of repression learnt by the state in Ireland are now being used against the miners. The police have occupied mining areas just as the British army is occupying the Six Counties and 20,000 plastic bullets are stocked in this country ready for use. The courts have imposed bail conditions on over 4,000 miners, 80% of those charged, to stop them picketing. The law is a political weapon to destroy the miners' resistance just as the Diplock courts, show trials and supergrasses are used against the Irish people. Maxine showed how the British state defends the rights of minorities like Loyalists and the scabs when their interests coincide with the needs of imperialism. She urged the miners to stand with the Irish people against the common enemy, British imperialism.

Gerry MacLochlain, ex-POW, argued that unity amongst the miners and the Irish people would terrify the British state. He saluted the courage of the

British Army Murderer – LIFE UDR Murderer – FREE

On 14 December British Army soldier Ian Thain was convicted of the murder of nationalist Thomas 'Kido' Reilly and was jailed for life. 'Kido' Reilly was a victim of the shoot-to-kill policy – he was shot on the anniversary of internment 9 August 1983 in Belfast. The week before, 30 July, Martin Malone was shot at point blank range by one of a group of 40 UDR men. Corporal Baird was later charged with Malone's murder.

Yet in the same week that Thain became the first British Army soldier ever to be convicted of the murder of a nationalist whilst on duty, Baird was acquitted of the manslaughter of Malone and walked free from the court. Baird joined the long line of British Army/RUC/UDR killers who have never been convicted of the murders of Irish nationalists.

Whilst Thain has become the scapegoat for British terror and murder in Ireland there can be little doubt that the conditions of his imprisonment will not be the same as the barbaric and inhumane conditions imposed on Republican POWs. It is not known where Thain will serve his sentence but it will be no surprise if he is repatriated to an English gaol as Loyalists and British Army soldiers have been before him.

The nationalist people of the Six Counties can only reflect that whilst for once an army murderer has been found guilty, as long as Britain maintains its domination of Ireland the Irish people will never see true justice and freedom in their country.

Pauline Sellars

women in the miners' wives support groups who had played an essential role in the strike just as the nationalist community is united in struggle. Gerry warned miners in prison to avoid criminalisation and asked them to join with Irish POWs in the fight for political status.

Tony, a miner from Dinnington, Yorkshire, was greeted with a standing ovation. He said that the lies spread about miners were the same lies told about the struggle of the Irish people and black people. He pointed out that while Kinnock condemned all violence his memoirs have an account of the time he 'kicked shit out of a political opponent'. Tony told the meeting of the fantastic support he had received from black sections in the Labour Party. Kathy from East London ISC spoke movingly of the perverted practice of strip-searches. A Durham miner said how 'one of the very good things about the strike was the way it had politicised thousands of people into fighting back'.

Every one at the meeting was asked to join the ISM in its work for the month of action in support of the miners.

Jim Dunlop

UNITED CAMPAIGN AGAINST PLASTIC BULLETS

The United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets was set up in Belfast in August to unite the various groups campaigning against the use of plastic bullets. The UCAPB called a picket in November of the Brocks factory in Dumfriesshire which produces plastic bullets. Edinburgh FRFI and EISC gave their support to the campaign and spoke to their representative, Gerry Downes, the brother of Sean Downes. He was over in Britain to hear the result of a petition to appeal against an interdict placed by Brocks. The interdict prevented groups from issuing statements about Brocks plastic bullets. The Court of Session lifted the interdict provided the headline 'Brocks Fatal Fireworks' was not used in any statements. UCAPB has received support from Arthur Scargill, Mick McGahey and Malcolm Pitt, and we urge FRFI supporters to send messages of solidarity and donations to: UCAPB, c/o Whiterock Road, Belfast, Ireland.

Lorna Morgan

PTA ARREST

On Tuesday 4 December Irish journalist and welfare worker Michael Maguire was arrested at 6.30am in his own home under the anti-Irish Prevention of Terrorism Act. He was held for nearly 13 hours until pressure from the IBRG and others forced his release at 7pm.

He was questioned about articles he had written in the Irish press. He specialises in exposing the activities of the SAS and other official terrorists. He was accused of giving support to a proscribed organisation for having reported the fact that during a recent Wolfe Tones concert the audience chanted 'Rock on Brighton'.

He was asked about the decision to disband Sinn Fein (Britain). He was, most bizarrely of all, asked if the RCG was trying to infiltrate Sinn Fein!

This latest arrest raises a new twist to the Act in that it is the first attempt to use the PTA against journalists writing about Irish affairs.

Smash the PTA!
Terry Marlowe

THE TORY BLUES

*Come on all you people
Listen unto me
Believe in solidarity
And let thy people free.*

*Come on all you people
Listen unto me
Believe in Maggie Thatcher
And you will sadly see...*

*... Riots at the pickets
And in the prisons too.
More frequent and more violent
And more malicious too.*

*Thatcher's government started it
And they'll start world war 3.
It's already started in Belfast
And is spreading across the sea.*

*Come on all you miners
Listen unto me
You're next in line for bullets
So are your families.*

*For plastic bullets are waiting
Just like the batons were too
And all the malicious beatings
They were from Maggie's crew.*

*Come on POWs
Listen unto me
Keep at what you're doing
And one day you'll be free.*

*Not just from the chains of injustice
But from the chains of Britain too.
'Cause Thatcher's will is not half as strong*

As the will inside of you.

*So come on all you people
Listen unto me
Believe in solidarity
And let thy people free!*

Ann Hill, relative of Irish POW, Paul Hill

JUDICIAL INTERNMENT

Belfast Republican, Thomas Power, has spent almost three years on remand on the sole word of five different informers, the longest period of detention by remand under the present informer strategy. Power is now awaiting trial on the uncorroborated evidence of paid perjurer Harry Kirkpatrick. On 20 November Power appeared in Belfast High Court to apply for bail. He conducted his own defence and pointed out that since his detention on remand in 1982, eleven Loyalist prisoners charged with murder had been released on bail as well as several RUC men, British Army and UDR members. Lord Chief Justice Lowry paid lip service to this deliberately engineered detention by expressing 'concern' on the 'question of bringing people to trial as quickly as possible'. But he then went on to deny Power bail on the grounds that he wasn't convinced that Power would turn up for trial. Power is now back in Crumlin Road gaol where he is about to enter his fourth year on remand.

Lorna Morgan

LOOKING FORWARD TO 1985

Political life in Britain has dramatically changed in 1984 – and the cause is the miners' strike. The split in the working class movement, which the Revolutionary Communist Group has pointed to ever since the 1981 uprisings, is now clear for all to see. And that split is deepening as we start 1985.

The January 1984 issue of Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! reported on its front page 'Yet again a trade union struggle has first been crippled and finally destroyed by the trade union leadership and the TUC'. We were referring then to the NGA/Messenger dispute when Thatcher's new anti-trade union laws reaped the first major defeat of 1984 – with a little help from the newly 'realistic' majority of the trade union leadership. The militancy of the picketers, the spinelessness of the TUC and the viciousness of the riot police deployed in full riot gear to charge into picket lines and stop coaches of picketers on the motorways, were just a taste of what was to come later in 1984. All the features of the Messenger dispute have come to full fruition in the miners' strike.

In the RCG's manifesto – The Revolutionary Road to Communism in Britain, published in February 1984, before the miners' strike began, we pointed to the irreversible split in the working class movement in Britain. On the one hand there was the organised trade union movement which:

'has accepted four million unemployed without fighting. It has accepted the dismantling of the health service, closure of schools, rundown of public transport, reduction of social security benefits and the enactment of the 1980 Employment Act without fighting back. All the elaborate machinery of compromise and arbitration upon which the trade union movement's traditional methods depend is being destroyed. And when battles have taken place each has been conducted in an isolated and sectional manner leading directly to defeat.'

and the Labour Party which:

'gives organised expression to the interests of the labour aristocracy... This is why the Labour Party is and always has been a racist pro-imperialist party. Its standpoint is bourgeois socialism.'

and, on the other hand, the oppressed people in Britain who:

'are increasingly forced into confrontation with the British state, its police, courts and prison system... These oppressed sections of the working class have nothing but contempt for the Labour Party and the leadership of the trade union movement. They reject their constitutional and parliamentary cretinism and instead have taken the revolutionary and insurrectionary road.'

The RCG's manifesto accurately portrayed the role both sides of the split would play in the miners' strike. The striking miners have joined the ranks of the oppressed and the miners' strike has opened the split into a chasm. The Labour Party and trade union leadership – typified by Kinnock and Willis – have played their role as betrayers to perfection. Only Arthur Scargill has stood out clearly and uncompromisingly on the side of the strikers.

It is no accident that through their experience at the hands of the police and the state, the striking miners have themselves drawn the connections between their struggle and the struggles in Ireland, South Africa and the uprisings of black youth in Britain in 1981. They now clearly face the same enemy.

As 1984 draws to an end the oppressed peoples of the world are carrying on the struggle against imperialism. In South Africa a revolutionary situation is developing. The people have been out on the streets, fighting, giving their lives since August. Eight United Democratic Front leaders face the possibility of the death sentence as they stand trial for treason. SWAPO and the Angolan people stand together against apartheid terror. In Central America the people are still fighting Reagan's terrorism. From the Pacific Islands to Palestine, oppressed people, women, children and men, are giving their lives because the imperialist system offers them nothing. Liberation movements in the Philippines, El Salvador, Ireland, and Nicaragua have all sent solidarity messages to the striking miners in Britain, together with black organisations and the black miners' trade union in South Africa. The seeds of unity amongst the oppressed and the British working class, against the common enemy – imperialism – have been sown.

In 1984 our influence has been central in both the fight against British collaboration with apartheid and in the building of solidarity with the Irish people. Readers of Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! will have read the

reports of the victorious struggle against the police for the right to picket outside the South African Embassy in London, and the political intervention which followed at the Anti-Apartheid Movement AGM. This work continues and needs to grow if we are to offer the solidarity which the people of South Africa require and deserve. 1985 will see a major campaign by the AAM for the implementation of the boycott against South Africa. FRFI will be in the forefront ensuring that oppressed people in Britain are leading the campaign.

In FRFI 44 we carried a 4 page pull-out report on the ISM weekend, drawing together the struggle of the miners against the British state and the experience of struggle against British terror in Ireland. Ireland remains the key to the British revolution and will be the decisive factor in the split in the working class movement in Britain. The connections have been drawn on the streets and outside the pits between Ireland and the British revolution. The test of the strength of communist ideas and practice will be whether sections of the British working class will take the side of the Irish people against the British bourgeoisie.

The publication of the Manifesto in February 1984 and David Reed's book – Ireland: the key to the British revolution – in April 1984 represented a great step forward for the only revolutionary organisation in Britain which consistently takes the side of the oppressed – the RCG. Our manifesto is a living document on which we draw in our political work. We are not crystal ball gazers, nor do we expect, as communists, to be able to predict all future developments in the class struggle. What we do expect is that our theory – our views about how humanity will progress – should be adequate to guiding our work as communists. During 1984 our Manifesto has proved its value – in 1985 we expect our work to grow and our Manifesto to develop alongside the class struggle.

David Reed's book was the culmination of both the theoretical and practical work the RCG has been engaged in, in solidarity with the Irish struggle, for the last ten years. It has been greeted with enthusiasm by revolutionaries in Britain and in Ireland. In 1985 the RCG will be producing a series of pamphlets which draw together our now considerable experience in the miners' strike, in the anti-apartheid movement, the Irish Solidarity Movement and on the question of prisoners in British jails.

In 1985 the RCG will be unashamedly asking for your financial and practical support – for our newspaper FRFI, and for our activities – because the RCG represents the voice of the oppressed in Britain. In April 1984 we held our first anti-imperialist rally with a wide and distinguished platform of anti-imperialists. In the Spring of 1985 we will hold another anti-imperialist weekend which will reflect the growth in the struggle over the last year.

In 1985 you can rely on the RCG and FRFI to continue the fight against imperialism. We send our new year greetings to all the oppressed in struggle and their allies – to the striking miners and their families, to the prisoners in British jails, the Irish and South African people in struggle, to the oppressed all over the world. Together we can make 1985 a milestone in the struggle against imperialist oppression and take another step on the revolutionary road to communism in Britain.

Carol Brickley

FUND DRIVE

WE NEED £500 A MONTH

Dear FRFI Reader, Even though we had to put up the price of the paper for those of you who are waged, FRFI still needs £500 every month to subsidise the special rate for unemployed readers. We are therefore counting on your continued contributions to the FRFI Fund.

Last month, we received £371.69. Of this, £100 was donated by Mary in Canada and £15.15 by other individual readers – our special thanks to them all. The remaining £256.54 was raised by the FRFI Supporter Groups: in London £181.70, Manchester £30.80, Edinburgh £23.49, Leeds £13 and Dundee £7.55.

Since neither you nor us are rich, in the long run FRFI has to be kept going by the combined effort of individual readers digging deep into their pockets and our supporters getting together organising fundraising events such as jumble sales, benefits etc. If you can think of any new ideas do let us know or better, even, put them into practice now... and send us the proceeds.

All donations are published in this column and your name/organisation is printed alongside it if you wish. Make your donation payable to 'Larkin Publications' and return to: FRFI BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

If we want to donate £_____ to the FRFI Fund.

Name/Organisation _____

Address _____

I do/do not want you to mention my name/organisation _____



Christmas greetings from prisoners to RCG, FRFI, NLISC

'Revolutionary greetings to all comrades at FRFI and RCG. Wishing you lots of success for '85. Yours in socialism! From Paschal. Forward ever, backwards never! Paschal Holmes, Irish POW, Portlaoise prison, Ireland.

'Seasons greetings to my fellow revolutionaries. Have a jar for me on the big day. Thank you all for your support this past year, we are beginning to see a bit of light at the end of the tunnel. Unidos venceremos'. Vince Donnelly, Irish POW, HMP Wakefield.

'This is to wish all at RCG and FRFI the best of Christmases and a great 1985.' Sean Hayes, Irish POW, HMP Albany.

'To everyone at FRFI, best wishes and deep comradeship'. John Bowden, HMP Durham (in solitary confinement).

'To all at FRFI and NLISC. Beir – Bua, yours in spirit'. Paul Hill, Irish POW, HMP Gartree.

'With best wishes and many thanks'. James Farrell, HMP Long Lartin.

FRFI sends Christmas greetings and solidarity to all prisoners.

Greetings to Irish POWs

The following Irish Republican Prisoners have forthcoming birthdays. FRFI sends our greetings and asks our readers to send birthday cards, preferably recorded delivery to ensure their arrival.

William Armstrong, 119085, HMP Hedon Road, Hull, North Humberside, HU9 5LS. 26 December. Eddie O'Neill, 135722, HMP Frankland, Braxside, Durham. 15 January.

Shane O'Doherty, 336143, HMP Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London, W12 0AE. 25 January.

Please note: James Bennet is in Parkhurst, not Wormwood Scrubs as we carried in our last issue.

Solidarity at Xmas and New Year. We send our warmest greetings to all Irish Political Prisoners in England and in Ireland.

FRFI SUPPORTER GROUPS

MANCHESTER

FRFI supporters group meets fortnightly. Contact Box 38, 434 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN. for details

EDINBURGH

October supporters Group. Get involved with FRFI activities in Edinburgh! Fortnightly meetings with political discussion and organisation of our work. Mondays 7 and 21 January, Drummond School, bottom of Broughton St 7-9pm. Admission 20p. Called by Edinburgh FRFI

FITZWILLIAM

Tuesday 8 and 22 January, Kinsley Hotel, Kinsley

LEEDS

Thursday 17 January, 7.30pm in Leeds Trades Club, Saville Mount, Leeds 7

DUNDEE

Street Sales. Join us! Help Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! Sell FRFI every Saturday, 12.00 Murrygate, Dundee

Irish Solidarity Movement

The Irish Solidarity Movement has affiliated bodies in Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Bradford, Southampton, North, South and East London. The ISM can be contacted by writing to ISM, BM Box 1320, London WC1 3XX

NEW VIDEO 'COMMON CAUSE' Campaigning video made by Edinburgh Irish Solidarity Committee. With interviews, scenes of street work, a play on the Raymond Gilmore show trial and much more material for all those interested in building an Irish Solidarity Movement. Hire charge £10 + p&p Write to EISC c/o Box 110, First of May Bookshop, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh

BARKING HOSPITAL STRIKE Longest running NHS Dispute Supporters welcome on the picket line, especially every Tuesday 6.30am-8am. Barking Hospital, Upney Lane, Barking. Nearest tube Upney (District line). Messages of support and for more information ring 01-592 5038

MANCHESTER

Jackie Berkeley Defence Campaign c/o Hayden Avenue, Moss Side, Manchester 14

MANCHESTER

Viraj Mandis Defence Campaign meets every Sunday 7.30pm, Manchester Town Hall. Contact: Box 38 Corn Exchange BDS, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN for details

BRADFORD

Viraj Mendis Support Committee meets fortnightly. For details write to VMSC, c/o The Starry Plough Bookshop, 6 Edmund Street, Bradford 5, West Yorkshire

MANCHESTER

10 hour picket Close down the Terrorist South African Embassy! End British Links with Apartheid Saturday 22 December, 9.00am-7.00pm junction of Market Street and Piccadilly Organised by Manchester FRFI

MANCHESTER

VMDC Xmas Social Friday 21 December 8pm to midnight, Black Lion Hotel, Chapel Street, Salford. Discos and VMDC Street & Bar Theatre Company. Admission £1.00, unwaged 50p

LEEDS

Public Meeting Victory to the Miners! Free the Prisoners! Thursday 24 January, 7.30pm. Leeds Trades Club, Saville Mount, Leeds 7. Organised by Leeds RCG

Buy it! Sell it! Do it!

Dear FRFI
On returning home from the final day of the Fitzwilliam 9 trial, I felt that I had to write to your paper and express my disgust at the web of corruption that is laughingly called justice. The sick system we live in has criminalised innocent people and even had the audacity to imprison one of them. The only criminals that I saw on that day were dressed in dark blue—they walked free of course.
Britain and its imperialist friends, have criminalised whole countries in an attempt to plunder their natural resources. Now, at a time of economic recession, the imperialists do the same to the miners and anyone else who stands in their way.
The events of the Fitzwilliam 9 trial have convinced me that only an organised body of people can rid us of these parasitical imperialists and opportunists. Therefore I would like to reply to a slogan of yours by saying: **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! 'I buy it, I do it, now it's time to sell it!'**
Yours
Cindy

Beware Militant

Dear FRFI,
I'm one of those persons who gets very upset by the Militant organisation and am really pleased to hear that workers like the miners are seeing right through these phonies. Like all sectarians Militant supporters are never so happy as when they are finding excuses so as not to engage in discussion, joint work, defence campaigns with others. When this does occur it is only because of pressure from newer, more open minded supporters. What they are very good at is telling you something eg 'We are against individual acts of violence' and sneering at genuine debate.

We've met people who have heard Militant members cracking racist and sexist jokes. One of their leading Scottish members, who accuses the IRA of shooting Protestant workers, was asked to sign a petition against plastic bullets, sniffed at it as if it was so much dirt and refused. This was just days after the murder of Sean Downes. Every time the issue of Ireland is raised, never by them, at public meetings a general groan comes up from them 'Oh no, not Ireland again', revealing their racist con-

tempt for the Irish people.

Militant are two-faced because if you get a chance to publicly challenge them on these points, which is pretty difficult at their stage-managed meetings, they claim they already have a policy against plastic bullets, Diplock courts etc. Whereas in private and individually they are not concerned one bit.

I've just heard that the Militant Council in Liverpool have unveiled a plaque to the workers jailed during the Cammell Lairds occupation. These men are entitled to ask where were Militant when they were in jail? Did they mobilise the Liverpool working class who they always claim are right behind them, to defend those in jail. Beware Militant, the people are not stupid. They know the difference between action and words whether they are uttered at meetings, printed in your newspaper or inscribed on a plaque on a wall.

For all their talk of fighting, building, organising, etc, keep in mind what the Militant tendency are really after and are not even ashamed about—the return of the rotten, pro-imperialist Labour Party under the arch-scab Kinnock.

M McGregor
Dundee

Evil things

I thought FRFI 44 was very interesting indeed. The special pull out was a little near the mark, and it was good to see a man like Malcolm Pitt a union president, standing up and saying what he really thinks. It's a pity a few more people are not so inclined.

John McCluskey released from prison as an Irish POW, seems to have a good idea about what will enable the NUM to become a force to be reckoned with. But as he outlines, too few of the trade union leaders are prepared to make a stand.

There can be little doubt that the same oppressor, at the moment the fascist Thatcher government, is equally the enemy of the ISM, FRFI, all prisoners, Irish POWs, the NUM, all trade unions and other peoples whose concern is for humanity in this and all other countries on earth. These class structures have held the workers downtrodden, and anyone who does not see eye to eye with the government of the day is held in a stranglehold by either declaring them insane, killing them or locking them up in prisons.

Every civilised member of the Homo Sapiens variety of life feels, knows, of the existence of those things that are decent and those things that are evil. What price that evil thing Thatcher and her cronies? The truth is I think that they do

know. And because they know it only heightens the level of inhumanity that for the sake of their own selfishness, greed and lust for power the rest of mankind can in their opinion, go to hell. Well, with that in mind, it's the duty to the future of all decent people to see that they are stopped. The only true course is communism. Long live the revolution. Down with the fascist dogs and corrupt extortioners of humanity, and racists and despoilers of mankind's future happiness.

We must all unite in the struggle against these animals, these barbarians, so our children may one day live as one, no matter what race, belief or creed, in peace, humanity and in solidarity with the whole of this world. Only then can we lay down the guns, because time and time again it has been proven that violence against these fascists is the only way they will ever acknowledge the existence of other people than their selfish selves.

I would like to wish everyone well involved with FRFI and all inmates of similar establishments as I find myself in at the present and all ISM people.

I see another fascist Old Bill is leaving us. Oh dear, poor Alf—'Police File' FRFI 44. So he should, is he not rich yet?

Yours in solidarity
Nick
HM Prison Wakefield

NUS rats on struggle

Dear FRFI,
At Blackpool the National Union of Students Conference decided against giving £20,000 to the National Union of Mineworkers, fearing legal action. They agreed on £1,000 only, plus the collection at the door for toys.

They rejected the proposals that miners are 'entirely justified in defending themselves by any means they deem necessary.'

On anti-apartheid, the Conference decided to support the Durban 3, to call on the government to put pressure for better conditions and access to lawyers and families. They showed solidarity with the Dunnes Stores strikers, Dublin, with a standing ovation. Also solidarity with the students and others arrested in South Africa.

Phil Woolas, the President, called on students to send Xmas cards to political prisoners and to mention Nelson Mandela. Siphon, a delegate and member of the ANC Youth Section, called for a standing ovation for all detainees in South Africa and to announce that Nelson Mandela is

Vice President of the NUS. This was achieved.

I also petitioned for the closure of the South African Embassy (SAEPC petition). The response was great: in a day, 320 students had signed!

Regarding racist issues in Britain, there was an 'anti-climax', when the demand for the release of two students, gaoled over the case of fascist Harrington, was defeated and a proposed motion by the Executive asking whether fascists and racists had the right to education was passed... Put it this way, the case was not dealt with!

Manipulation was there, with speakers from the floor diluting or complicating issues, confusing some! To finish on a note of optimism, radical elements were present such as the Manchester Area NUS, selling T-shirts for 'Direct Action', 'The Enemy Within' and 46 FRFI papers were sold on Sunday!

Colette Levy
London

Thanks for solidarity

Dear friends in Manchester FRFI
On behalf of our group may we thank you most warmly for your wonderful donation to our funds.

For the last 9 months we have been giving our men a daily meal and a food parcel when we could afford to, now with Xmas nearly here, we are raising money to give all the children a present and a party. We have a lot of kids and its one mammoth task, but we will do it when we have such wonderful supporters as yourselves.

We have all been feeling down in the dumps lately, with all the trouble we have had, especially in our community. We have wondered if it has all been worthwhile. We knew from the start of the fight we had on our hands, but even if we lose, no other section of the working class could have fought like us and our marvellous supporters have done.

We are eternally grateful for everyone's support and solidarity and we wish you all the best of luck in whatever you do.

May you all have a wonderful Xmas and God bless you.

Kind regards
Margaret Dawson
Kinsley & Fitzwilliam Miners' Wives Support Group, c/o Linda Turgoose, 41 Kinsley House Crescent, Fitzwilliam, West Yorkshire

Police attract attention

Dear FRFI,
On Saturday 27 October Dundee Anti-Apartheid organised a street meeting on the Durban Threë. We set up our placards and banners on a corner in one of the main shopping centres of Dundee. We addressed the public through a loud-hailer and read out things like the statement of the Durban Six.

We had not been petitioning and selling for an hour when the owner of a big shoe shop asked us politely to move as we had emptied his shop and were obstructing the entrance to the building. We refused to move as in our view we were not obstructing the door to the shop.

About half an hour after this incident three policemen approached the area where we were standing. Again we were asked to move but again we refused. As the police stood behind us we realised that more and more people were stopping to read our banners and finding out what we had to say. In the end the police attempt to undermine our activities had failed and in doing so had caused greater public interest in our campaign.

Victory to the Durban Threë
Smash Apartheid Now
Rupert Heather
(Aged 14)

All this is trying to do is attack the school and gay people. There is an address and telephone number on the leaflet. They are, 20 Lambert House, Stockwell Park Estate, London, SW9. The phone number is 733 9995. These leaflets were in great demand because everybody wanted to rip them up. Only one person wanted to believe them.

Personally I think they're the Nazis because they don't know what they're talking about. What this leaflet was about is a video which was shown in commercial studies which shows that relationships between gay men and gay women are normal. This is what the London-Parents-Action say is evil, but I don't believe them. I don't want Nazis like them in Pimlico.

Pimlico School Student
(Aged 11)

Fascism in schools

Dear FRFI
I am writing to tell you about these two people who claim to be members of a group called London-Parents-Action. These people are more likely an NF cover up. Here are some quotes from their leaflet entitled Blue Murder At Pimlico. 'Pimlico wants girls to hate boys. Why! Because too many teachers are gay or just plain Man-Hating Feminists', or 'Any "Nutt" teacher who is prepared to take part in this brainwashing should be sacked NOW! Along with the ILEA "LOONIES" and their "Militant Nazi" masters the GLC!' or even, 'Pimlico wants their kids to hate their parents!'

In defence of the Grenada revolution

Dear Comrades,
A year after the invasion and occupation of Grenada by US imperialism, the bourgeois media continues to churn out garbage about the overwhelming popularity of the Marines and the faction fight between the 'moderate' Maurice Bishop and the 'hardline Marxist' Bernard Coard. Sadly, there are sections of the British left prepared to contribute their own disinformation; an article in the *Socialist Action* 26 October, contains more falsehoods than I can take up in this brief letter. Here are the worst ones:

1. 'The United States boycotted, but never dared attack a democratic Grenada under Bishop'. In fact, there were at least four CIA-backed plots to overthrow Bishop from October 1979 to June 1980!
2. The article says Coard was seeking to install 'an East European type regime'. This echoes what is now the standard bourgeois propaganda line that the division was between the 'pro-Cuban' Bishop wing and the 'pro-Soviet' Coard wing. But it's a total lie. Fidel Castro's November 14 speech was published in *Pravda* the day after it was delivered! *Socialist Action* makes no mention of the real outside involvement, that of the CIA. It was a CIA agent who fired the shots that killed Bishop.
3. 'Political differences in the Cuban Communist Party are never made known to the party ranks, much less argued out publicly'. I don't know where *Socialist Action* gets its information on

what goes on in the Cuban CP; and as *Socialist Action* doesn't normally argue out its political differences publicly, I can't imagine why it's urging the Cuban CP to do so. Let's face it, if I was in Fidel's position I wouldn't be too keen on opening up the party's internal affairs at the request of *Socialist Action*, whose logo is taken from the CIA's 'free trade union' Solidarity in Poland.

Socialist Action is claiming here that the Cubans are responsible for the Grenadian tragedy. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Coard clique's ten-year disruption campaign in which the CIA was heavily implicated, would never have been tolerated for a moment in Cuba.

After reading such drivel from the petty-bourgeois left, *FRFI* comes as a breath of fresh air, as a committed partisan, not an unwanted adviser, of every national liberation struggle in the world. Keep up the good work. Forward ever, backward never.

Warmest fraternal greetings,
Mike Webber

FRFI completely endorses Comrade Webber's criticisms of Socialist Action, their ignorance and typically British arrogance towards the socialist countries. However, until further information is available to us we cannot agree that Bernard Coard and comrades were an instrument, witting or unwitting, for the CIA. We look forward to hearing more from Comrade Webber and other readers opposed to the imperialist occupation of Grenada.

SPECIAL FUND Help us buy our own typesetting equipment! – cost £6000!

£1,295.50 raised in 5 weeks. £3704.50 still to go!

You will have read in the last issue of FRFI that we are planning to establish our own production unit. We need to do so urgently. We need to have the means of producing communist newspapers, books, pamphlets and leaflets. The centre page article in this issue exposing the disgusting media coverage of the mighty miners struggle shows why.

Typesetting is an indispensable stage in the process of producing our own publications. With technically advanced equipment we can get FRFI and other material to YOU quicker.

The excellent start to the Special Fund Drive is the result of the collective efforts of RCG members, supporters and readers of FRFI. Contributions have come from FRFI activists in

Manchester	£500
London	180
Edinburgh	192
Liverpool	30
Bristol	25

Individual donations include a £200 cheque from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous as well as from Stephen Costa and Dorothy Ross.

Join those who have already given. Help us in our campaign. Help us keep FRFI independent! Help us reach our target of £6,000. With your help we can succeed.

Take up our special offer: any reader who sends £10 to our special fund will get a FREE copy of the RCG Manifesto. If you send £15 you will also get a free copy of Ireland: the key to the British revolution by David Reed.

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